DECEMBER 1952

COMMENTARY

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The True Glory of the Maccabean Revolt — THEODOR H. GASTER
How Totalitarians Gain Absolute Power — PAUL KECSKEMETI
Freedom or Authority in Group Life? — OSCAR HANDLIN
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New Deal Wake: Boston, Massachusetts — HAMLEN HUNT
Cedars of Lebanon—
Man, the Master of All Created Worlds — HAYIM BEN ISAAC
On the Horizon—
Henry Adams' Skeptic Faith in Democracy — GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB
The Study of Man—
The Prospects of American Capitalism — DANIEL BELL

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Will Herberg — Daniel J. Boorstin — Irving Howe
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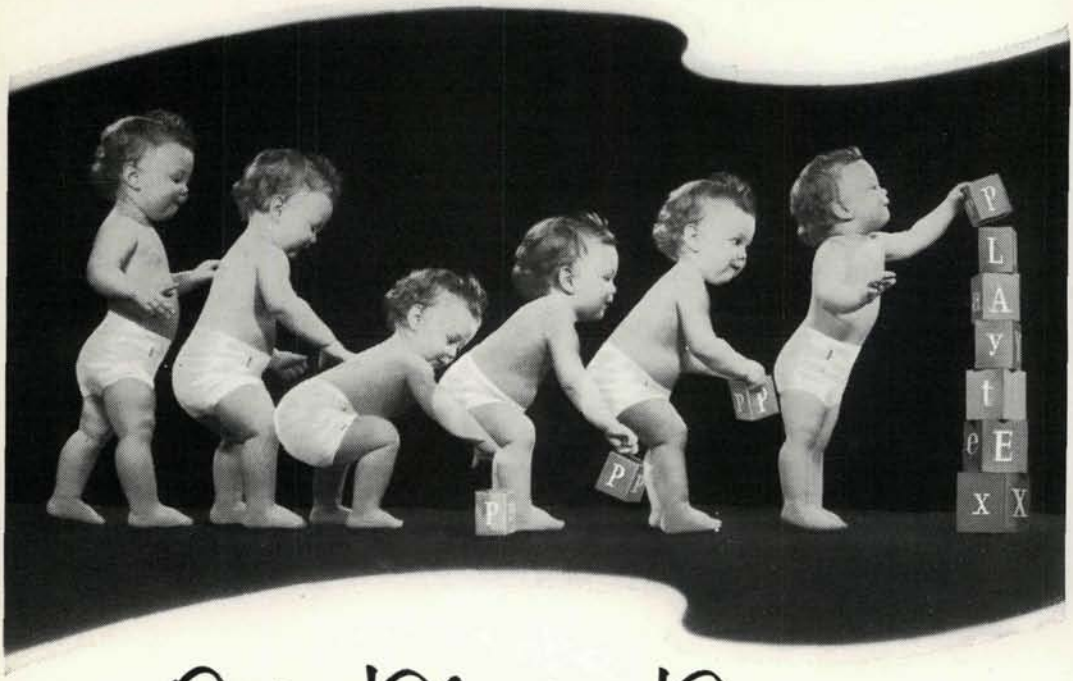

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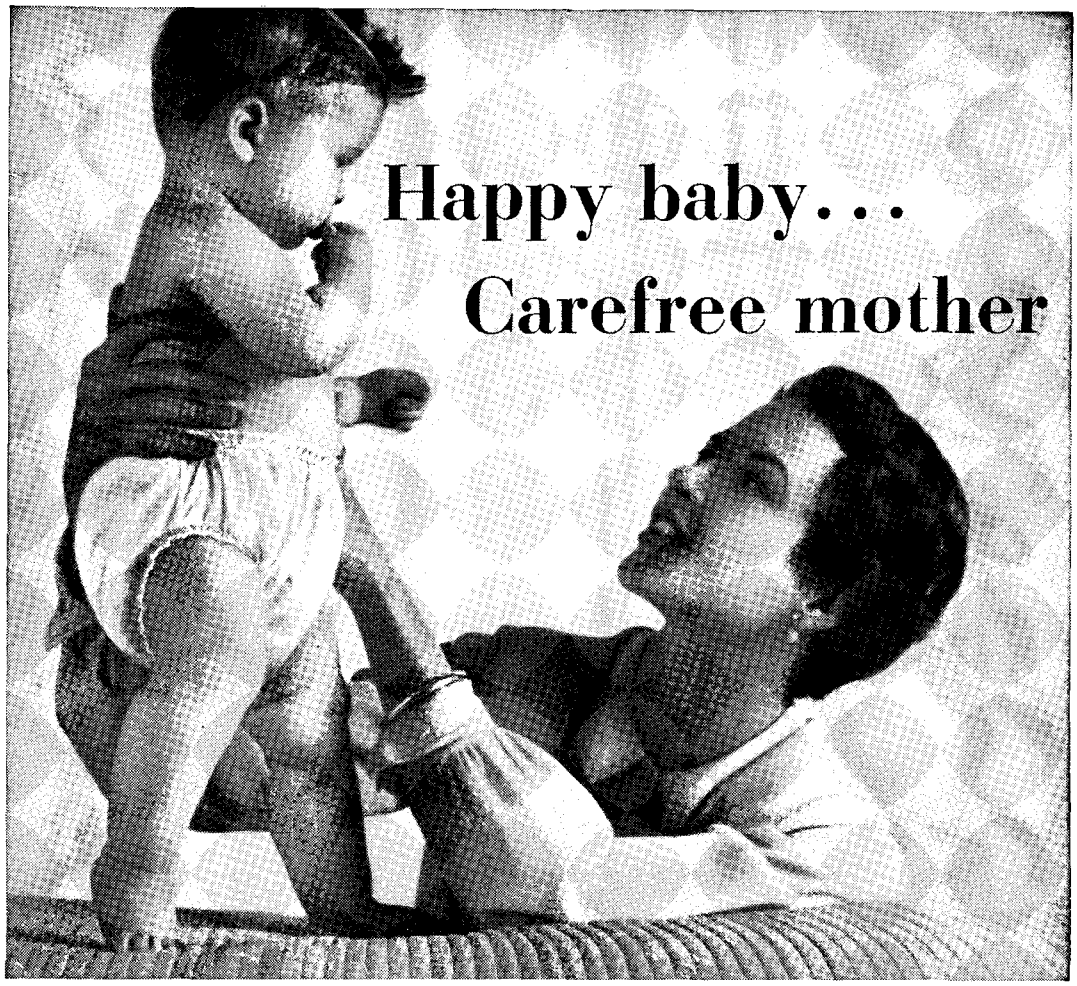

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Doing Business in Iraq · *C. Berkeley Cooke, Jr.*

Mr. Cooke, an American businessman with twenty-five years of experience in Wall Street, went to Baghdad to liquidate the affairs of a Jewish-owned bank; his unadorned account of his experiences tells much of the situation in that country.

Economic Fruits of Republican Victory *J. K. Galbraith*

Professor Galbraith of Harvard addresses himself to one of the most important questions raised by the last election: what kind of economic policy may we expect the Republican administration to follow? The first in a series of articles on the 1952 election and its consequences.

"Oh Grave, Thy Victory. . . ." *S. T. Hecht*

The Jews of East Reedville, already made familiar to our readers by previous contributions of S. T. Hecht, are here revealed wrestling with the ultimate problem — death, and in particular the question of whether the body of an erstwhile member of their community, an apostate, may lie in hallowed ground — and at what price.

Coup d'Etat in Syria *Ray Alan*

Many observers have been anxiously watching for the rise of new Kemal Ataturks in the unstable Moslem world, and the regime of Colonel Shishekly in Syria has appeared to some of them to offer hope. Mr. Alan analyzes the actions of the new regime and considers whether it can create a stable and progressive state.

The Meaning of Yizkor *Theodor H. Gaster*

The Jewish prayer for departed parents looms ever larger in Jewish religious services and has become the sum of all religion for many Jews. Professor Gaster considers the history of this prayer and whether its intrinsic significance warrants its present great importance.

European Unity: How Close? *Herbert Luethy*

The situation may look hopelessly confused from this side of the Atlantic, but, Mr. Luethy tells us, Western Europe is proceeding toward unity slowly—and surely.

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COMMENTARY

WHEN THE RED ARMY LIBERATED PINSK

How Could We Know There Were Two Hamans?

JULIUS MARGOLIN

I. September 1939

WAR seemed unlikely to us in the summer of 1939. Thousands of people with no ties to bind them to Poland were in a position to pull up stakes, but thoughtlessly gave way to inertia. The Jews, for the most part, made little effort to extricate themselves. Hitler was on one side, the rest of the world on the other. It was scarcely conceivable that Germany might involve herself in war on two fronts at once.

Not until the evening of August 23 did war appear inevitable. On that date, the world learned of the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact. With Stalin's blessing, the pogrom began in September 1939.

FROM the 1st to the 17th of that month, we were witnesses to the pathetic spectacle of Poland's disintegration. A country of thirty-six million people—a whole civilization,

---

Most tragic history, someone has said, is a chronicle of might-have-beens—omens misread, choices missed, decisions taken too irresolutely or too late. This eyewitness report of one of the most agonizing episodes in Jewish history describes how, in 1939, East European Jewry failed to recognize—indeed, how could they have?—in the advancing Red Army a force representing what was in the end to prove one of the great historic destroyers of Jewish life. This report is taken from the first four chapters of a book written by JULIUS MARGOLIN in Russian under the title *Travels in Prizonia*, but to date published only in French translation as *La Condition inhumaine: cinq ans dans les camps de concentration soviétiques* (Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1949).

In June, 1940, shortly after the end of his narrative as given here, the author was arrested by the Soviet police in Pinsk and sentenced to five years at forced labor. It took him another two years after his release from the sub-Arctic to escape from Soviet-dominated territory and regain his home in Palestine, where he lives today in Tel Aviv. Dr. Margolin is a highly regarded thinker who writes on philosophical and Zionist subjects. One notes how much this memoir documents what Paul Kecskemeti has to say in his article "How Totalitarians Gain Absolute Power" (page 537, this issue) on the key role for totalitarianism, both Nazi and Communist, of the process by which successive groups of human beings are labeled superfluous and marked for liquidation as "iniquitous enemies" of the people. It need hardly be mentioned that the Communist purge trials now going on in Prague, in which the Jewish people is being accused before the world as a conspiratorial, treasonable group, gives a poignant and topical relevance to both this memoir of Mr. Margolin's and the Kecskemeti analysis. (The excerpts from Mr. Margolin's book have been translated in one part from the French and in another part from the Russian, by Waldemar Hansen and Shlomo Katz, respectively.)

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with all its virtues and drawbacks, with historical traditions and a culture dating back a thousand years—collapsed like a house of cards. The war was lost from the outset, when the Polish troops below Poznan fell back before the German tanks.

The Germans crawled forward like a cold, giant reptile, and every night the radio brought us the uncanny voice of the master race, a slow, venomous speech, its nasal twang charged with mocking triumph and menace. The German broadcasts intended for Polish consumption used to begin with Moniuszko's *Polonaise*. To this day, I cannot hear that slow and solemn music without shuddering.

On the fifth day, at dawn, I left Lodz. A telephone call had informed me earlier: "There's a place for you in the car; we'll wait fifteen minutes." That morning the Germans were thirty miles from the city. I took my briefcase and left. It promised to be a bright and shining September day. I remember thinking: "Perhaps it will be all of a month before I reach home. I ought to take my overcoat." Turning back to the house, I took my topcoat down from the rack, then hung it up again; instead, as a double precaution, I took along my heavier winter overcoat bearing the label of a Lodz clothier, "Ewigkeit." Armed with "Ewigkeit" and my briefcase, into which the maid had stuffed—why, I shall never know—my bedroom slippers, I left Lodz.

Unlike the other Jews of Lodz, I knew perfectly well where my home was: Palestine. My family had been settled there for some three years, and I had come to Poland that summer as a mere visitor, my sole tie with her being a Polish passport—and the feelings of a Polish Jew.

The patriotism of the Polish Jews belongs to the past now. There are no more Polish Jews. The Poles now living in Berek-Joselevitch Street will never know either us or our feelings. But as I began my Odyssey that morning, I was suffering from a genuine emotional upset; in my thoughts the Polish tragedy took precedence over the tragedy of my own people—which I ought really to have been thinking of.

We rapidly left Lodz behind us. There were four of us in an old black Buick headed for Poland's eastern frontier. (Later that night the mass exodus from Lodz began; tens of thousands of people fled. We were fifteen hours in advance.) On both sides of the road lay woods and fields, meadows bathed in the summer sun, the Polish earth. All the way to Warsaw, eighty miles, we were escorted by German planes; they seemed to regard their mission over Poland as an occasion for amusing and harmless sport. Passing at reduced speed through small market towns crowded with people and traffic, we saw everywhere the signs of rising desperation and panic.

Warsaw, in a breathing spell between air raids, was boiling like a cauldron. Sax Place was jammed with cars from distant places. The Hôtel de l'Europe was packed to the doors. Our gas had run out, and we lost two days searching for more. On the fifth day of the war the trains had stopped running except at night, and even then it was impossible to board them, they were so crowded.

We left Warsaw on the 7th of September, at eleven in the morning. We crawled all the way to Minsk-Mazovetzky. The confused mass of vehicles and people choking the road was indescribable: pedestrians, people on horses, baby carriages, open and closed trucks, buses, wagons, taxis, motor vans with cars on them, wheelbarrows loaded with miserable belongings. Women tugged children by the hand; young men in uniform marched along with knapsacks and suitcases. Once in the middle of this crowd it was impossible to get out, and we were simply carried along. Suddenly, flying very low, German bombers would appear (all the way to the Rumanian frontier we never saw a Polish plane). The crowd would scatter to all sides, like a flush of birds before a hunter's gun. But the hordes of refugees were not bombed that day. On the next, however, the Lublin highway became the scene of carnage, and the road surface was covered with blood.

After Minsk-Mazovetzky, eighteen miles beyond Warsaw, the road cleared. But we were not yet free of the planes. All the towns along our route were marked by bombs. The Germans seemed to be everywhere at once. Siedletz was in flames as we passed, and cottages were burning in the valleys through which we drove at full speed, pursued by the droning in the sky. On the outskirts of Mendzygetz we stopped to wait for the end of a raid. It seemed, somehow, that now one

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last spurt forward would tear us away from the war. One last effort—and all that would be left would be a hot summer's day and the undisturbed quiet of a country road where a bearded Jew drove slowly past in a wagon.

A hundred and twenty miles east of Warsaw nobody had the least idea of what was actually happening. The Poles counted, in their fantasy, on help from the West, on British air power, on the French breaking through the Siegfried line, on the intervention of the Red Army. Officers lied to their soldiers; the local papers boasted of a Polish cavalry offensive in East Prussia, of bombings of Berlin, and a French occupation of the Saar.

At Kovel we found a peaceful Jewish town with forsaken gardens, wooden porches, great courtyards, and an inn full of distinguished visitors from Warsaw. Barefoot urchins sucked their thumbs and goggled at the unusual visitors sitting outside the tavern: dozens of cars, swarms of ladies in elegant traveling clothes, big industrialists from Lodz, and the deputy mayor of Warsaw himself. At the far end of the street was the kibbutz, where young Jews were still serving their apprenticeship for a future in Palestine. Portraits covered the walls; the tables were littered with literature that had now become useless. Here everything was too late. "Escape," I wanted to tell them, "don't trust your elders any more. They don't know anything, they can't do anything for you, they are no longer responsible for anything!" But it was too late for arguing.

We arrived in Lutzk at nightfall, part of a long line of cars with their headlights out. The next stop was Rovno, crowded with refugees from Cracow, Lvov, and the provinces. On their way through Rovno ministers of the Polish government told cock-and-bull stories about a counter-offensive that was being organized against the Germans, and then discreetly disappeared in the direction of the Rumanian frontier.

At Tarnopol we were struck by the complete impassivity of the Galician Jews, with their phylacteries and black gowns. They seemed unconcerned with all that was going on about them. Having put themselves into God's hands for once and all, they had decided not to cross any bridges till they came to them. So they waited patiently until they could go back to their businesses.

In the crowd at Tarnopol we saw, however, the first signs of demoralization—and of the coming Nazi order. In a narrow lane I first heard, from the mouths of young Polish army nurses dressed in khaki and carrying gas masks, expressions of venomous hatred toward Jews, cries for a pogrom. The nurses were impatient. A few days later Polish children, some of them no older than six years, attacked aged Jews, men and women, on the streets and tore their hair out with their little hands.

On the 15th of September we arrived at Czortkov. Two days later, awaking to a calm summer morning, I decided to go to the *starosty* and ask for a pass to Zalestchiki. To my great surprise, I found the place empty. Office doors swung wide, desk drawers were pulled out, not a soul was in the corridors. In a rear office two clerks stood by a window, looking at planes circling overhead.

"Their planes, obviously," one of them was saying in a trembling voice.

I brought forth my request, but they hardly listened to me. "For God's sake, go anywhere you want to! . . . This is a fine time to ask for a permit."

As I left I stopped in an adjoining room and turned on the radio that I saw there. At that moment the text of Molotov's speech was being broadcast, the official communiqué announcing to the world that at dawn of that day, by reason of the collapse of the Polish Republic, the Red Army had crossed the frontier to take under its protection its brother peoples of the Western Ukraine and White Russia.

One hour later we left Czortkov in full haste. Our gas barely lasted to the Rumanian frontier. We passed Polish troops, their eyes on the horizon, wondering why the Soviet tanks hadn't arrived yet; their officers had told them that the Red Army was coming to their aid.

At Zalestchiki a road block stopped us. Afraid of being caught by the Red Army, we decided to take the road to Sniatin, ninety miles away, but only three miles from Rumania. We got there at one in the afternoon; the road to the frontier was filled with a solid line, two and a half miles long, of military vehicles, trucks, and requisitioned private cars. That night the Rumanians opened their frontier. Our Buick took its place in one

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of the three lanes of traffic, and inched into the darkness. The road was alive with feverish talk, voices calling to one another, horns honking. In nervous expectation we came to the sacred border line, where a Rumanian officer stood under an arch with a lantern in his hand, writing down the number of people in each car. "Next! Next!"

Our turn came at dawn. We were allowed to go five yards over the frontier line. A Polish officer was helping the Rumanian officer pick out the Jews. "Your papers!" He read our driver's passport: "Moishe Schimkevitch. . . ." The names of the others in the car were scarcely less incriminating. They asked us to get out, and we had to go back to the rear of the line on foot, since the Rumanians kept our automobile. "Let's not leave any cars to the Bolsheviks!" the Rumanian explained in German. Near us a Frenchman was cursing because they refused to let him pass. It was explained to him that there was a Jew in his car, a chance companion. Everything was settled very quickly: the Jew was dislodged, and the Frenchman, overjoyed, drove off. How nice to be French!

Still, they let us keep our suitcases. It began to rain—hard—and in the downpour we dragged ourselves with our luggage back to Sniatin. I must have been a sorry sight, for on the outskirts of the town a Jewish woman came out and invited me to rest and take some tea. Such was my first experience in the role of Wandering Jew.

That same day I, together with some other Palestinians, made a last effort to return to Palestine: we proposed to the Rumanian authorities that we be allowed to go by automobile as far as Constanza, under police guard, in direct transit to the boat. We waited half a day, on a little frontier bridge, for the reply to be telephoned from Czernovitz, and were finally turned away with insults.

THE following day the sky was cloudless, the sun shone, music blared, and everybody was in the streets. During the night the Soviet army had entered Sniatin.

The red flag waved from the tower of the town hall; tanks were parked in the main square; the streets teemed with people. Crowds surrounded every Russian soldier, besieging him with questions as everybody shoved to get a look. The soldiers were good-natured, and answered the questions without a trace of surprise or embarrassment.

It was only several years later, when I was inside Russia, that I understood what a farce had been acted out that bright morning by the laughing soldiers of the Red Army—how the sly dogs from Yaroslav and the Ural had strung us along with their hogwash about the paradise of the *kolkhozes,* and boots at sixteen rubles a pair! Obviously, they had received special instructions, but must also have been motivated by that special Russian patriotism which takes pleasure in mocking Poles. The Jews, however, immediately had doubts. When they heard, "In our country, we have everything," they began to ask sly questions: "Have you got Copenhagen?" Naturally they had Copenhagen—whenever they wanted it!

Everything became clearer still when the local Red Army headquarters ordered the reopening of stores and declared that the Russian ruble was worth a Polish zloty. Immediately, a bargain-day crowd of Soviet buyers rushed into the stores. "A zloty for a ruble!" Whatever merchandise was in stock was given them for nothing, as a bounty accorded to victors. Later I saw officers of high rank enter the empty stores and, not knowing how to read the Polish signs, ask what there was to sell. They bought everything and anything: nails, luggage, bathing suits, never stopping to ask the price. And the Jewish storekeepers, who at first had added a mere ten or twenty per cent to their prices, weren't slow to realize that these people *needed* everything, and at any price.

Sniatin was blissfully content. In the crowded stores the officers, busy with their purchases, were the soul of politeness. The townspeople organized a welcoming program in honor of the Red Army and decked the town out with bunting; seven hundred citizens marched past the Soviet headquarters, carrying red flags and crying hail and hurrah. Most of the paraders were Jews, some were Ukrainians; but there were no Poles. In view of the fact that Sniatin had around five thousand Jews who had good reason to be glad that the town was being occupied by Russians, and not Germans, the number of Jewish enthusiasts was actually not high. However, the Poles didn't see the thousands who stayed away; for them, it was a "Jewish demonstration." That evening a woman

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teacher complained to me bitterly of the attitude of the Jews of Sniatin.

IT WAS not easy for us to bring ourselves to leave the neighborhood of the Rumanian frontier. We hadn't yet given up hope; we looked for more contacts to get us across, we lay in wait for a chance. But how long could one stay without attracting the attention of the Soviet authorities? By night, in a private house, we gathered to listen to a radio, our only contact with the outside world. Warsaw was still holding out, the Red Army pursued its advance, we were still waiting for a miracle on the Western front. Our sleepy little frontier town was like a small island of silence.

The roofs of the Ukrainian *isbas* were now covered with corn and pumpkins. The Russians set up their headquarters in the white building of the Zionists, its pediment still bearing the Star of David. And we, lost Europeans to whom all this seemed but a dream, borrowed books from a private library that still functioned, and devoured Montherlant instead of reading Ecclesiastes.

Nobody could be found to help us across the frontier. Finally we went to the Russian headquarters, bearing our passports stamped with numerous visas, and humbly solicited permits for foreign travel. With obvious disapproval, a swaggering, mustached officer thumbed through our little blue books decorated with the Polish eagle. The telephone rang. The officer scowled menacingly and barked into the receiver:

"Bachelor of what? Burn the damned diplomas! We haven't got time for all those ribbons and titles! In pharmacy? Well, say you're a pharmacist, then!"

He turned toward us: "Who are you?"

In good Russian, but without listing our degrees, we explained. Then the officer magnanimously offered us—poor refugees that we were—free tickets to Lvov, the capital of the Western Ukraine.

II. Encirclement

IN THOSE days thousands of desperate people were fleeing before the German invasion. Nazi barbarism and the collapse of the Polish regime left only one way out: the East. Poles turned to their Slav neighbor for protection; Jews put their hopes in the great "libertarian, multi-national republic"; socialists put theirs in the "Cradle of the Revolution."

Almost everybody saw the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland as a surprise move to block the Germans rather than as a part of a cynical division of spoils arranged in advance. Never before in Poland's history had there been a more favorable moment for putting an end to all the old internecine quarrels, for burying the hatchet of civil strife and uniting Poles and non-Poles in gratitude to Soviet Russia. It wouldn't have taken much, at that time, to win over the lot of us.

It took some time for people to realize they had been taken in. . . .

Lvov was the scene of chaos, with ruins still smouldering. Lists of the dead were posted on the walls of houses. Panic-stricken refugees and soldiers jammed the streets. Legion Drive was yellow with autumn leaves, and along the length of it they were hastily setting up platforms, flag poles, and monuments of plank and plywood painted to imitate marble.

Lvov hadn't forgotten the first Russian occupation of 1914, when the Czar's army had brought truckloads of flour. This time the gifts were less utilitarian: the Russians put fresh flowers at the foot of the Mickiewicz monument in Mariatsky Square, and Jewish radio broadcasts were announced. There had been no real interference as yet; refugees were quietly registered along with Polish army officers. But from the moment that it became clear that the Soviet army was *occupying* Poland, not *liberating* her, the Poles began to flow back en masse towards the German zone.

Though the actual fighting had stopped, Lvov seemed to be still in a state of siege. Hundreds of people waited in long lines under the autumn rain for bread, vodka, a bit of candy. Numerous cabarets and restaurants sprang up where refugee served refugee; strange dives made their appearance, rendezvous for black-marketeers and former "café society," where people spoke in low voices of the chances of escaping to Hungary or slipping over the border to Rumania. But we were already encircled; all the frontiers were closed except for the partition line between eastern and western Poland, across which streams of refugees passed more or less illegally in both directions. The line between eastern Poland and Russia proper was

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another matter: passage either way was impossible without special authorization, and private individuals didn't have a chance of getting it.

The first thing I did on arriving in Lvov was to go to the local Soviet headquarters and ask for a travel permit to Rumania. It seemed easy. I lived in Tel Aviv, in Palestine; my home and family were there; I had arrived in Poland four months before, and had been overtaken by the war; my passport and visas were all in order. I was told to come back in a week. Then they told me to come back in two weeks. On each visit I found different officials, all of whom protested ignorance of my case. Palestine, residence permit, visas were all Greek to them; my Polish documents might just as well have been in Latin.

I spent my days impatiently waiting. It never occurred to me that I simply just wouldn't be *allowed* to go home. If anyone had suggested that, I would have laughed. Deep in a jungle, I still reasoned in terms of European law and order. The friends with whom I had escaped from Lodz had no visas or residence permits for Palestine, and so at the end of October decided to go to Vilna, which the Red Army had just returned to Lithuania. I stayed behind. From Vilna, which they reached safely, they were able finally to make their way out of Europe. One got to New York, another to Brazil, a third to Australia. I managed to wind up in Palestine—but it took me seven years.

At that time, still well-fed and living more or less normally, I strongly resented my isolation and the ridiculousness of my situation. Lvov became intolerable. Two days after the Soviet plebiscite I took the train for Pinsk, my mother's home town, where I had lived as a child. Several times before in my wanderings that city had been a stopping place to tide me over a rough period.

To get to Pinsk, I had to go north via Rovno and Louninetz. The Ukraine of sugar and white bread stops at Rovno, where the landscape takes on a barren look; there the fogs of Byelo-Russia begin, lakes, dismal plains, wet little woods, and deserted railway stations flanked by piles of timber. At Rovno I was surprised by a sorry sight the like of which I had never before seen in Poland: a crowd of boys of between eighteen and twenty, dressed in unbelievable rags, or hardly dressed at all, barefoot, or in ragged footgear, some wearing cast-off women's clothing, and rags knotted about their necks, were gathered in the railroad station. I wasn't the only one to be shocked. Where on earth had they come from? It turned out they were Red Army draftees from Leningrad on their way to military service. It was as though a door had been opened on another world, and we all felt sick to our stomachs.

Soviet Byelo-Russia began at Louninetz, where the walls of the station were covered with tatters of red cloth, and big posters. The place was crowded with peasants wearing *lapti* (shoes of birchbark) and carrying knapsacks. The Jews there were very different from Galician and Polish Jews; they were Litvaks, a healthy, robust, red-faced and rough-featured race—Jews of Polesie, with round heads and sharp little eyes, a people so dear to my heart I would recognize them at the other end of the world.

Once in Pinsk, I went immediately to the office for visas and alien registration. It was easy to convince the illiterate and obliging young official who received me that Poland was not my home and that I belonged in Palestine. He obviously had nothing against that but he lacked the authority to issue a visa. My request would have to be sent to Minsk, the capital of Byelo-Russia. When I saw that he could hardly write, I took the pen from his hand and filled out the questionnaire myself. To this day I don't know whether it was ever sent to Minsk. More than likely, the young man simply took it down the street to the local NKVD (state police), where the functionaries were less well-intentioned. The noose around my neck—that invisible noose around the neck of every Soviet citizen—was already tightening.

As time passed and no word came from Minsk, I guessed that matters hadn't turned out so well, and leaving Pinsk in a hurry, I again made for Sniatin on the Rumanian frontier. I spent three days there, wandering about the deserted streets. The refugees had gone; the Poles had disappeared. I was warned strongly against trying to cross the border: it couldn't be done. But there was still the Lithuanian frontier to the north. I could have kicked myself for not having gone there with my friends in the first place. How much time I had lost!

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Lvov again. It was like a busy crossroads, and I found myself in the middle of a nondescript crowd of people milling around desperately while the earth slid from under their feet: money-changers, all kinds of speculators, persons selling the last of what they owned, new officials and Soviet employees, go-getters and refugees.

Many of these people, like myself, had come to Poland just before the war. Grandmothers who had traveled hundreds of miles to spend a summer month with their grandchildren now found themselves on Soviet territory. Young people from Palestine suddenly became aware of their uncertain legal status, and felt cut off from everything going on around them; their one desire was permission to leave as soon as possible. To be a foreigner in the USSR is a crime.

Endless streams of new and tired refugees arrived from the German zone, further overcrowding the city. Late in December I went to Lida, on the Lithuanian frontier. It was on the railroad line from Baranovici to Vilna; Vilna at that time was the goal of all hopes, the doorway to liberty. I carried a knapsack and had very little money left. Lida was a far cry from the prosperity of Sniatin or the many restaurants in Lvov. It was intensely cold; miserable shops in ruins stood boarded up. There were refugees everywhere, new arrivals with flight across the border written on their faces. The city was overcrowded; not a bed was to be had, and for several nights in a row I slept on the hard ground, in a two-by-four shack, with some people I had met by chance. At meals I sat with rabbis in fur caps, and bearded Jews escaping from Soviet atheism and eager to reach Vilna, the Lithuanian Jerusalem.

Together, we formed a group of seven persons, and we arranged with a guide to help us across the frontier. I didn't have enough money, but my companions agreed to give me credit as far as Vilna, where I hoped to pay them back. I was in a terrible state of nerves because of the cold and discomfort in Lida, my illegal status, the nights passed on the fly, the filth, the anguish, and all the stupid confusion of those days. Finally, on the 28th of December, we were given the green light.

But we didn't get very far. Armed guards poured out of a cottage by the side of the road: as luck would have it, a police barrier had just been set up that same morning. They stopped our sleds, in which our womenfolk were riding with our baggage stacked behind them. We were all taken back to Lida.

At the NKVD office, when I said that I had been on my way to Radoun, a small town about ten miles off, they advised me to find work in Lida and not try to go to Radoun, since that was forbidden. That was all there was to it.

Some of us stayed; other refugees left for Sventziany to try to cross the frontier there, and some of them succeeded in doing so in January. A Lvov family I knew got across the frontier near Lida, with their children, heavy baggage, and all. It cost them a fortune, but didn't save them from death; two years later the Germans murdered them along with the rest of the Jews in Vilna.

I HAD had enough of the whole business, and was sick to death. Being an outlaw didn't agree with me. On the 31st of December, 1939, after many difficulties, I boarded a train headed towards Pinsk. We arrived in Louninetz at midnight. The Pinsk train wasn't due till six the next morning. I wandered about the station until I suddenly remembered that the New Year was being rung in all over the world at that moment. The New Year!—I shook off my depression and walked into town.

The narrow streets of the desolate little place were empty and silent, and the snow crunched under my feet; like the Wandering Jew, I dragged myself along, pack on my back. I stopped under a window, where from behind the closed shutters I could hear glad cries of "Happy New Year!" Here people were celebrating while I stood outside like a beggar. On an impulse, I knocked at the door. It opened and I looked into a warm, lighted corridor. It was a stroke of luck; just in that particular house the teachers of Louninetz were celebrating New Year's Eve. I told them I was a teacher, too, and they took me at my word, and so I left my knapsack in the vestibule and joined the gathering. There was still some beer left.

Thus, among strangers and at a stranger's table, did I greet 1940, an appalling, star-crossed, blood-stained year, a year of misery in which evil triumphed, a year that brought slavery and death to millions of men, and to me the most extraordinary adventure of my life.

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III. The Story of a Disappointment

THIS is the story of a disappointment—though not of my own. I had never felt attracted to the Soviet regime, never had any faith in the scientific value of its doctrine, or in the morality of its political institutions. My attitude towards the USSR was one neither of illusion nor of declared hostility, but rather that of a foreigner pure and simple.

When the Red Army entered Poland the mass of the population of Western Ukraine and Byelo-Russia were deeply grateful, and put all their hopes on the Russians. Man naturally believes in the good will of every new regime until he has proof to the contrary. As long as he hasn't been knocked down he is inclined to be optimistic, and even after having been knocked down, he still hopes it was only a misunderstanding.

How could the Soviet government, in the space of one winter, have made an enemy of everyone in the territory it occupied, regardless of class, national, or political differences? The explanation of this is very much to the point, since it will give an idea of the methods and technique of Sovietization in general. In Pinsk, I was able to follow this process through its various stages.

First, the officials of the original Polish government disappeared before our eyes. Nobody was concerned, however, and I doubt if a second thought was given to their fate. Yet the method at work, typically Bolshevik, required not merely their dismissal, but their liquidation *in toto*. Thus they disappeared without leaving a trace.

Then came the turn of the *ossadniki*. During its twenty years of independence, the Polish regime had parceled up many of the great estates on its eastern borders, and installed independent farmers on them—not local Byelo-Russians (or White Russians), but Polish settlers, soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the Russo-Polish War of 1920. These increased the Polish ethnic element in the eastern provinces, and were intended to prop the Polish state in a non-Polish area. But in twenty years they had become integrated with the local population, and their children spoke its tongue as their own. It seemed not only that they would not Polonize the Byelo-Russians, but that, on the contrary, the Byelo-Russian peasants would absorb and assimilate them, as they had already assimilated the Polish small gentry of their country.

The local population would never have made trouble for these *ossadniki*, who were farmers like themselves. Soviet rule, however, coming from *outside*, classed the *ossadniki* as enemies and deported them, just as the Germans deported Jews. The fate of these Polish settlers made a strong impression on the Jews of Pinsk. They were taken away in the heart of winter, in a bitter frost. Rumors were circulated of unheated trains that had stood in the station for two whole days, and of mothers throwing the frozen corpses of their children out of the windows of padlocked cars. These crimes, in true Hitler style, spread fear.

The liquidation of the *ossadniki* was followed by the systematic mass deportation, to the interior of the USSR, of all people of any influence in their localities, all those who were socially active or held important posts. Not only were the peasant middle class, the intellectuals, and patriotic Poles liquidated, but everybody, Byelo-Russian and Ukrainian alike, who had any recognized authority. The more popular they were, the worse it went with them. Most of them died somewhere in northern Russia.

In Pinsk, the next move was directed at the town Jews. The local fifth column helped draw up a list of the "leisure elements," which included storekeepers, furniture dealers, lawyers, merchants—hundreds and hundreds of people in all. All these Jews were expelled from the cities and sent out into the little towns or the countryside, where nobody knew them and they lived as shelterless refugees.

This was, of course, better than Hitler's ghettos, but people were far from being able to make such comparisons at that time. The Jews affected considered their deportation a catastrophe, the wrecking of their whole lives. I remember those March nights of 1940, when I would wake and listen to appalling sounds in the darkness. The whole street would be weeping, and you could hear the distant screams and lamentations of women. "They've gone to the neighbors next door!" I could picture the entrance of armed men in the dead of night, the cries, the haste, the oaths, the threats, two hours' time to gather together one's belongings. And the next morning, the store next door, where only yesterday you could buy cheese and butter, was desolate and shuttered, its doors barred as after a pogrom. A feeling of indignation and revolt

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spread among the peaceful inhabitants of Pinsk against a regime whose minions rushed into their houses at midnight and destroyed their lives.

THE next measure brought about the Sovietization of the schools, and the closing of newspapers, libraries, and publishing houses. Others were to be set up in their stead, and on the standard Soviet models. This "extirpation of culture" was accomplished grossly and mechanically, like pulling healthy teeth and replacing them with false ones. In effect, we were denied the right to teach our children anything else but Communism, were not allowed to read what we chose, or to think and live as we had a mind to. Nor was this operation performed with the aid of an anesthetic.

Pinsk had a Jewish school of the "Tarbut" group, the pride of the city, with seven hundred pupils and a good library; it was the citadel of Zionism, the center of Hebrew education, lovingly nurtured by the Jewish community of Pinsk. Now the Russians forced the Tarbut teachers to conduct their courses in Yiddish instead of Hebrew; Bialik and Tschernikovsky became forbidden authors overnight; Hebrew books were withdrawn from circulation. The students resisted. That winter, boys and girls continued to learn the proscribed language in secret; they swore not to forget Zion, not to let themselves be torn away from their national culture. It must not be forgotten that every family in Pinsk had relatives or friends in Palestine. Of course, this youthful resistance couldn't have lasted very long, even if Hitler had not invaded Russia. It would have died out of itself, or been crushed by the camps and the deportations, as all attempts at national independence are in the USSR, Jewish and otherwise.

The liquidation of the Jewish political bodies and organs of Jewish social life in Pinsk was completed by the spring of 1940. The heads of the Bund had been arrested and deported; in April the Zionists were singled out and each of them condemned to eight years in concentration camps. Systematically and unpityingly, every active element that might conceivably have offered resistance to the "reeducation of the masses" was rooted out. All independent thought, all potential opposition was outlawed. The only protection was to efface oneself, to lose oneself in the crowd, not to stand out in any way.

The Soviet regime could not feel safe until the last vestiges of any Jewish cultural and political life that had existed before 1939 had been totally erased. The destruction was carried out blindly and mechanically, without hate and without pity, by newcomers from Soviet Russia supported by police power. And its victim was a society with living and creative traditions, with vitality, youthful pride, and a culture infinitely superior to that of its executioners. This society, accustomed in the past to criticizing openly every move of a Polish government whose absolute authority it had never recognized, now found itself dominated by a callous, brutal, stupid force.

But it wasn't enough to paralyze people by disarming them politically and depriving them of their active members and leaders. Even then, a man still had one retreat left: he could withdraw into his private life. Like a snail, he could retreat into his shell, bury himself in family and friends, maintain his life with things put aside for a rainy day, and memories of happier times. But not under the Soviet regime.

AT THE beginning of 1940, except for speculators and those with unknown resources, we all became employees of the Soviet administration. Up till then freedom of work had existed. But now we were made part of the forced-labor system. The change came about gradually, but some of us already knew what was in store—knew that in the USSR one's place of work was fixed, that to quit any employment without permission was severely punished, that it was easier to get a divorce than to leave an unpleasant job.

The terms and conditions of work under the Soviets came as another shock to the people of Pinsk. The state wasn't a private enterprise where you were free to insist on returning home after eight hours of work. The state demanded respect, the state expected zeal and devotion from its new citizens. The workers of Pinsk weren't in the habit of working overtime and on Sundays and holidays; nor were they accustomed—when their work was done and they were ready to go home to dinner—to attend compulsory meetings and feign enthusiasm in response to speeches; nor did they enjoy not being paid regularly. The fact that conditions of work and social security were worse in the USSR than they had been in bourgeois Poland was a discovery for most.

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Little by little, the enthusiasm of the first days began to wane. The past began to appear in another light. At factory meetings orators would remind the workers with pathos of their terrible exploitation under the Poles when they had had to work for only sixty zlotys a month. But Soviet wages averaged a hundred and eighty rubles a month—which amounted to only thirty pre-war zlotys. If what the Poles had done was exploitation, what could one say of the Russians?

It was impossible to console oneself by thinking that all this was merely temporary, the effects of a period of transition, and that normal life would reestablish itself. It became clear beyond any reasonable doubt that conditions of life in the USSR itself were even worse. Local workers who in September 1939 had gone voluntarily to the Donbas and other places in Russia, and then fled back, gave us a full report. But we didn't need their word for it. Soviet citizens arriving in the devastated towns of Western Ukraine or Byelo-Russia were so delighted to be there that you didn't have to cross-examine them to find out what things were like back home. What to us was dire poverty was sheer luxury to them. Butter and bacon were sold in the markets of Pinsk at prices one-tenth of those in Soviet Ukraine. And the middlemen still had hidden reserves. To come to our country, miserable as it was, meant to be clothed, to eat one's fill, and save something for the children's shoes. The people of Pinsk were dumfounded to see the Russians wearing nightshirts by day, sleeping without sheets or blankets, and ordering ten glasses of tea at a time in the canteens. Why ten? That's easy: they had to take while the taking was good. Half an hour later there wouldn't be any tea left for the local half-wits, and the man would sit gloating over the rows of glasses as he distributed them to his friends.

The Russians were cautious, and at first made a secret of what things were like at home. But after several months among us our Soviet tenant no longer had any fear of his host, and his tongue loosened, especially when he was drinking. Then we learned the truth that had been hidden for so long: "You didn't know when you had it good! You were living in a paradise. You had everything, you weren't afraid! Us?"—and here the man would tear at his overcoat—"Do you see what I'm wearing? Our life is as gray as that!"

And we believed him, because our life too had become gray and oppressive, as though they had put us in a cave.

THE workers went to the factories reluctantly, the cooperatives were empty, the canteens badly kept, the barbers gave bad haircuts, the craftsmen turned out bad work. To counteract this, everybody had to be supervised; and the supervisors had to have someone to keep an eye on them; and so the NKVD held its club over everyone's head.

The Byelo-Russian peasants who had brought milk and eggs into my mother's kitchen for twenty-five years weren't afraid to speak their minds. One of them said: "For twenty years the Polish government tried to make Poles out of us, and they didn't succeed. In two months the Bolsheviks have made Poles out of us."

A thousand rules and regulations, lack of contact with the rest of the world, suppression of political parties, missing neighbors deported to unknown places—this was the picture. In the long run the people of Pinsk who hadn't been deported, and continued to live, for better or worse, under the new conditions, would perhaps have accepted their misfortune (and especially that of others). Even the shock of finding out that people lived much worse in the USSR than in Poland would have lessened with time.

When I ask myself why there were soon no Soviet sympathizers left in my city, why there was no one—aside from a clearly defined and clearly designated group that stood out like an island in the sea—who did not want to return to pre-war conditions, the answer is obvious. It wasn't because our pre-war situation, especially that of the Jews, had been so perfect that it couldn't have been changed for the better; it wasn't because we were afraid to freeze through a winter or be deprived of white bread, or because we were too backward to understand what was good for us. I dare say, that in those days the people of Pinsk learned to understand—if not consciously, at least in their hearts—the meaning of the word "freedom." In the proclamation announcing the annexation of Poznan and Lodz to Germany, the Nazi authorities spoke of the "great honor and immense good fortune" bestowed on these two Polish cities by the Germans. That was a lie. But what happened in Pinsk, in all of Byelo-Russia,

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and in the Eastern Ukraine under the Russians, was the same lie. Somebody held our mouths shut and spoke for us. Somebody had walked into our houses and into our lives, and had taken possession of them without our consent.

IV. If the Prophet Elijah . . .

Let us make a brief digression into the realm of the miraculous. Let us imagine something impossible. Let us visualize a fantastic and supernatural situation: what would have happened in the city of Pinsk had the prophet Elijah appeared there early in the summer of 1940?

Much time has elapsed since that summer, and though none of us is a prophet, and it is hard for us to enter into the frame of mind of a prophet, in the present case we can without difficulty imagine how a person gifted with supernatural foresight would have felt in Pinsk.

Such a person would have beheld a city on the verge of perdition and tens of thousands of persons doomed to die. Under the most favorable circumstances these people had no more than two years to live. Thousands of them were destined to perish sooner.

These people were in a trap without exit. On one side was the German border and the Gestapo. Anyone crossing that border died. On the other side was the Russian border. The "wise Stalin policy" tightly sealed this border. Not one of the dwellers of the doomed city could force his way across the line separating the Russian zone of occupation in Poland from the Soviet Union.

Thirty thousand Jews in Pinsk, and nearly two million in the entire Soviet zone of occupation, found themselves in a blind alley.

But since they did not know what the future held in store for them, they were not particularly distressed. For one thing, they did not foresee that they would soon fall into the hands of the Germans. Secondly, they could not imagine that such an event would spell their extermination. Thirdly, they all hoped that after the war a state of normalcy would be restored, and each visualized the future in rosy hues. Some saw it in Palestine, others in a democratic Poland, still others in the super-democratic Soviet Union.

And so, let us imagine that the prophet Elijah came into this city and said to its poor and shortsighted people: "Here is the truth about your lives. Those who put their trust in the Soviet Union ought to know that in a year the Germans will come and lock you in ghettos. Within a year, you, your wives, your old people, and your children will be slaughtered. And anybody who now runs towards the Germans will be running towards his death."

And let us imagine still another miracle—that the people of the city of Pinsk, who as a rule responded to prophecy unwillingly, now believed the prophet and said to him: "What should we do, then, Prophet Elijah? We see no way out. On the right there is the Gestapo; on the left the 'wise Stalin policy'; under our feet lies the earth that will soon be our grave; above us stretch the heavens. Take us to heaven, Prophet Elijah, for we see no other way."

And the prophet Elijah would have answered wrathfully: "Your place in heaven is reserved for you. Seek a place on earth where you can stay alive."

And they would have said: "We do not know what to do. Show us the way to life."

And the prophet Elijah would have shown them the way to life.

And in fact, there was a way to life for millions of these Jews. We do not now have to guess and rack our brains as to what it was. So strange was this way, it lay beyond the mental and moral powers of the Jews. Looking back, it is clear now how they should have acted.

The prophet Elijah could have advised them one thing above all—to desist from falsehood and pretenses.

Did the teachers of the Tarbut high school really need to gather and pass obsequious resolutions renouncing the Hebrew language and Hebrew education? They had not been transformed overnight from Zionists into Communists. They did what they actually did because they were full of fear and hoped to avoid persecution and the loss of their students. So they took the "opportune" path. They hastened to agree with the enemies of Palestine and of Hebrew.

Yet the real road to life for these teachers and for hundreds of their students was to announce: "We appeal to the government to confirm the rights of our school because its language and its program of instruction are in accordance with our desires and we will not consent to their betrayal."

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Thousands of Jews who did not want Soviet citizenship might not have voted in the elections to the Supreme Soviet or accepted the Soviet passports that were foisted upon them. Instead, they might have said aloud what they all thought: "We do not need your citizenship and we ask to be registered for emigration to Palestine."

And if there were opponents of Zionism in their midst at that time—and there were—these could have at least proclaimed aloud that the existing regime and state of affairs were unacceptable to them. For, in fact and in their deepest convictions, they did find the regime unacceptable.

Granted, such a campaign of civil disobedience would have been pure madness. I do not for a moment believe that such a thing would have been possible without the personal intervention of the prophet Elijah. But before my mind's eye I clearly see the tranquil residents of the city of Pinsk.

For instance, there was Dr. I., my personal friend, a very good doctor and a lovable person. In his reception room there hung a framed portrait of Maimonides with a lengthy inscription in Hebrew. The most prominent spot was occupied by a blue and white JNF box. This Dr. I. had never concealed the fact that he loved his people and felt attached to Palestine. He did not remove Maimonides' portrait even after the Soviets took over. But why did he, the owner of two brick houses and a man devoted to tradition, turn into an ardent Soviet patriot in the course of a single week? It is possible that he feared for his houses. It is possible that he felt it was necessary to do as he did. In any case, it was a lie. What Dr. I. really wanted was to be left in peace, or to be given the chance to go to Palestine, and if not there, then to America. Certainly he did not want the Bolsheviks.

Civil disobedience would have had fateful consequences for the Jews of Pinsk. The Soviet government does not joke about such things. The Bolsheviks would have been surprised at first, since they were not used to hearing Jews speak out to them frankly and clearly what was in their minds. First of all, they would have hunted down some of the leaders, and in the end they would have deported all Jews, together with their wives, children, sacred objects and personal belongings, from the border districts.

The Jews would not have been the first or the only people to whom this had happened in the Soviet Union. They would have found it hard in Central Asia or the Yakutsk. Many would have perished. But, on the whole, they would not only have survived the war, but by means of their opposition they would have provided a decisive argument in favor of Jewish national culture and the Jewish national movement. The executioners of the "wise Stalin policy" would have learned that Hebrew and Zionism had some roots in the Jewish people.

These people had a way to life, and, as in all such cases, the way to life would have been that of honest and open struggle. But alas, no prophet explained this to them.

They were all intelligent, practical people. Had anyone told them that it was never desirable or, for that matter, practical, to compromise with what was implacably hostile, they would not have argued. They would have said that such a person was out of his mind, that he was either a fool or a visionary—whereas we ourselves have children, homes, jobs, for all of which we are responsible. This is what intelligent people would have said, and they would have been right from their own—intelligent—point of view.

If it is possible to draw a lesson from later events, then it is this: common sense is not always the best guide, especially when its obverse side consists in ordinary cowardice.

For the past two thousand years Jews have been accommodating themselves to the surrounding world, and during these two thousand years their shrewd calculations have proved founded on sand, and their history—as in the case of the Jews of Pinsk—a chain of catastrophes and a way to death. What happened to the Jews of Pinsk was no exception. Nobody can guarantee to us, the survivors, that some time in the not distant future a situation may not arise such as that which arose in Pinsk in the summer of 1940. Enemies on the right, enemies on the left, the empty sky above, and a yawning grave at our feet. And there will be no prophet Elijah, no new Moses, to lead us dry-shod through the parted waves.

If the lessons of history have any value, we will then recall the history of the Jews of Pinsk, who perished because until the end they lacked the courage to be true to the truth and themselves.

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THE TRUE GLORY OF THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

What Liberty Was Fought For?

THEODOR H. GASTER

THOSE of us who have been brought up to believe that the Chanukah light is a brave candle shining in a naughty world are naturally apt to inquire in more critical moments, just how bright is its gleam and how dark the encircling gloom. In other words, what is the broadly human significance of the festival, apart from its interest as a historical commemoration? When we look to conventional expositions for an answer, we cannot fail to be both surprised and dismayed at what we find. Mostly they consist in apologetic distortions of history, narrowly nationalistic and self-serving, couched for the most part in parochial clichés and stereotypes. Is Chanukah, then, devoid of more universal human meaning and values? On the contrary, once the apologetic varnish is removed, few religious festivals possess richer human values or a more timely relevance to our present needs.

In the conventional exposition, as set forth in sermon and broadcast, or in textbook and Sunday school instruction, the central theme of Chanukah is usually represented as the victory of Hebraism over Hellenism—that is, of Jewish over Greek values. The revolt of the Maccabees against the power of Antiochus IV is considered, as it were, no more than the particular but, so to speak, routine historical setting within which this momentous symbolic triumph happened to be achieved. The antagonists in the struggle are the people of Jehovah on the one hand, and of Zeus on the other, but these chief characters of the drama are only superficially linked with the authentic realities of either the politics or the culture of the period: they are little more than conventional lay figures in the simplest moral fable. The Jews stand for the Torah-bound—that is, morally and religiously bound—way of life, and the Greeks are a collection of hedonists dedicated to the pursuit of physical and aesthetic delights and to the cultivation and worship of beauty. The Greeks, we are told, saw religion in beauty, whereas the Jews saw beauty in the divine law; the battle between them was, in fact, a challenge flung from Zion against Helicon, and the victory was that of the synagogue over the gymnasium. Greek culture, in this view, is a heathen abomination, and the cleansing of the temple by Judah and his followers removed defilement not only from the House of God but equally from the lives of men.

What is wrong with this presentation is that it totally adapts both the authentic facts and the true religious meaning to fit a superficial romanticized ideal, and, far from gain-

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CHANUKAH, the least important of the great Jewish holidays to our forefathers (it is the only post-Biblical Jewish holiday), now shows promise, because of its proximity to Christmas, and because of unhappy events in recent Jewish history, of becoming one of the most important. Owing to these same causes the festival has in many quarters taken on a tone and focus in keeping with neither its traditional significance nor its broad religious meaning—or, at least, so many believe. THEODOR H. GASTER, visiting professor in the history of religions at the University of Rome, and formerly professor of comparative religions at Dropsie College, considers here what meanings we may justly claim for the annual Chanukah festival in the light of its historical origins and the needs of our present situation. Mr. Gaster has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY—most recently with "What the Feast of Booths Signifies" in our October issue. He is the author of *Passover, Its History and Traditions* (1949), *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (1950), *Purim and Hanukkah in Custom and Tradition* (1950), and *The Oldest Stories in the World,* which was published a month ago by Viking.

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ing by the transaction, results only in obscuring what is really significant both in the narrative and in the festival. The events that led up to the institution of Chanukah can be pieced together in some detail from the First and Second Books of Maccabees (in the Apocrypha of the Bible), from the narrative of Josephus, and from the writings of such Greek historians as Polybius and Diodorus Siculus. It is apparent from these accounts that the issue was not at all the vindication of Jewish over Greek values; and the struggle was anything but a mass uprising of the Jewish people.

WHAT really happened?* In 167 B.C.E., the Seleucid king Antiochus IV, whose dominions included Palestine and Syria, anxious to weld together the diverse elements of his empire, decided to inaugurate a totalitarian policy, involving as its key stroke the establishment of a "state church" under which the several religions of his subjects were to be subsumed. The god of this "church" was to be the Greek Zeus, with whom all of the national gods were to be promptly identified; and in order to indicate that it was simply an organ of the state, Antiochus claimed—in accordance with a practice common among the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings—to be that deity's visible incarnation, arrogating to himself the title of "Epiphanes," or "(God) Manifest," and ordering that title henceforth to be stamped upon the coins of the realm. This policy, largely inspired by the necessity of presenting a united front against the ambitions of Rome on the one hand and of the rival power of the Ptolemies on the other, constituted a break with the system of cultural self-determination and pluralism, to use our modern phrases, which had prevailed since the days of Alexander the Great—a system under which the empire had been regarded rather as a union of vassal peoples, politically subservient to a central government, but culturally and religiously independent.

*The background of the Maccabean movement is excellently and expertly summarized in Elias Bickerman's *The Maccabees* (Schocken Books, New York, 1947).

In pursuit of his policy, Antiochus issued a decree prohibiting, on pain of death, any expression of Jewish distinctiveness, and ordering the Temple services to be accommodated to the new national religion. When his officers visited the small town of Modin (today called el Arba'in) to supervise enforcement of the measure, an aged Jewish priest named Mattathias, of the family of the Hasmoneans, offered resistance.

The words in which he did so are extremely significant. "No matter," said he to the royal emissaries, "whether all the other peoples in the realm abandon each its ancestral form of worship, I and my sons will go on walking in the covenant of our fathers." These words are usually taken as a proud and courageous affirmation of Jewish loyalties, and such indeed they are. But they are also something more, for modern studies have shown that the phrase "to walk in the ways of one's fathers" is commonly employed in documents of the Hellenistic period relating to the conferment of cultural or religious independence, not only upon Jews, but also upon other national groups. In using this phrase, therefore, Mattathias was proclaiming his intention not only of remaining faithful to Israel's traditional covenant with Jehovah, but also of defending the established civic rights of the Jews against arbitrary abrogation.

THUS, the resistance had *two* objectives. First, it was designed to safeguard the actual identity of the Jews. In Israel—as throughout the ancient Near East—church and state were coextensive, religion being not so much a matter of confession and belief as the sanctioned regimen of communal economy. Any interference with the administration of the Temple or with the practice of traditional religious rites therefore involved *ipso facto* an impairment, if not a dissolution, of Israel's distinctive identity.

Second, the resistance was designed to safeguard the constitutional status quo. In this, Mattathias and his followers were championing a cause which, transcending the particular interests of the Jews, extended also

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to *all* the national groups within the empire.

It is clear, however, that neither of these issues involved an ideological conflict between Jewish and Greek values—a struggle between Hebraism on the one hand and Hellenism on the other. The issue was simply and starkly one of group survival and group rights.

An equally serious distortion of history is the prevalent idea that the Maccabean revolt represented a people's uprising of the Jews against their Syrian overlord. For while it is true that the movement eventually attracted a large number of supporters, the record makes it perfectly plain that official spokesmen of the Jewish community were hostile to it and, moreover, that the bulk of the Jewish population was already so far gone in the process of assimilation that the championship of Israel's distinctive identity meant nothing to it. The high priest at the time was a rank "collaborationist," and the accredited leaders of the Jews were what might be described as "Hellenes of the Mosaic persuasion." It was only after Mattathias and his followers had gained the support of the religious pietists and, by a fanatical vigilantist campaign, had forced the apostates back into the fold, that they could muster sufficient strength to offer serious opposition to the state. Thus we read in the First Book of Maccabees (2:45-48): "Mattathias and his associates went the rounds, tearing down the heathen altars and forcibly circumcising children upon whom the operation had not been performed. . . . And they pursued after the sons of pride . . . and they delivered the Law out of the hand of the gentiles and out of the hand of the kings; neither suffered they the sinner to triumph." As this passage indicates, the Maccabean revolt was from first to last a minority movement, directed as much against degeneration within as against oppression from without. And therein, indeed, lies no small part of its true significance, and hence of the permanent lesson of Chanukah.

Nor is it only on historical grounds that the conventional presentation of the festival is open to objection. Equally assailable is the very antithesis it implies between Hebraism and Hellenism, for this is, as we have suggested, more a contrast between artificial modern stereotypes than between actual cultures as they existed at the time. No balanced person believes today that the Frenchman is necessarily amorous, the Englishman taciturn, or the Jew sly. In the more abstract realm of culture and ideas, however, the stereotype still reigns. To the average American, for instance, Mohammedanism is still a compound of muezzins, sheikhs, the Koran, and a permit to have four wives; while the epic struggle between the democratic and Communist theories of society tends to be conceived, in the popular mind, as a trading of blows between a stereotype Main Street on the one hand and a stereotype Kremlin on the other. The same kind of facile generalization and superficial caricature produces the conventional antithesis between Hebrew and Greek cultures. For while it is true that the Greeks, by and large, preferred speculation to revelation as a means of interpreting the universe, and while it is true that the Greeks were inclined to be less impressed than were the Hebrews with the authority of transcendental law, it is a pernicious exaggeration to regard aesthetics as exclusively "Greek" and morals as exclusively "Hebrew," and only an insensitive and unperceptive philistinism can pit the one against the other as opposing values. The issues raised by Greek tragedies and discussed in many of the Platonic dialogues are essentially moral, even if the approach to them is through philosophy rather than revelation; while such Greek gnomic poets as Theognis bear ample testimony to the fact that Greek standards of ethics were inspired by something more than worldly shrewdness and practical expedience. Similarly, the prophetic and poetic books of the Bible—the speeches of God to Job, for example—suffice to show that an aesthetic, even sensuous, appreciation of nature was by no means foreign to the Hebrew temperament.

Moreover, even if the alleged contrast between Greek and Hebrew culture could in

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fact be maintained for the Classical age of the former and the earlier Biblical periods of the latter, it certainly did not obtain in the time of the Maccabees. For the so-called Hellenism of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires was no exemplar of the ideals of Periclean Athens, but a strange, bizarre amalgam of Greek and Oriental influences. Indeed, it is significant that the Zeus Olympios whose worship Antiochus sought to impose and whose statue he imported into the Temple at Jerusalem, was not the Zeus Olympios of Classical Greece but a hybrid of both Hellenic and Asiatic extraction.

EQUALLY misleading is the presentation of the Maccabean revolt as a resistance to the abstract principle of totalitarianism. Such a picture has an obvious appeal to the contemporary mind, but is totally incorrect. For the fact is that the distinctive Jewish culture which Mattathias and his followers sought to defend and preserve was itself essentially totalitarian, resting on the theory that every aspect of life must be governed by the dictates of a transcendental law (Torah) and subsumed under the contours of a Divine Plan supposedly revealed in that law. Nor, indeed, were the Maccabees prepared to compromise this totalitarian theory through any deference to individual conscience. The concept of personal liberty did not enter into their outlook; as we have seen, those who did not conform to their program were made to do so by force and regimentation.

An alternative popular presentation of Chanukah portrays the Syrian monarch as a kind of early Hitler and his assault upon the Jews as inspired only by virulent hatred of them. This, too, is a caricature. There is no evidence whatsoever that Antiochus was an anti-Semite, and the explanation has been advanced only by a process of *ex post facto* reasoning or by a desire to account on a psychological basis for Antiochus' sudden break with the more tolerant policy of his predecessors. The fact is that Antiochus was motivated entirely by political considerations.

He had just returned from a costly expedition against the rival power of the Ptolemies in Egypt, having virtually subjugated that country and actually captured its king, Ptolemy VI. But the peace which ensued was an uncertain one. The Egyptians had promptly placed on the throne their defeated sovereign's younger brother, and although Antiochus tried astutely to use him as a puppet, the arrangement did not work. The old captive continued to plot resistance, and the ambitions of Rome in relation to Egypt were providing a further obstacle to the plans of the Seleucid emperor. In addition, many of the national groups within his own borders, and among them a goodly portion of the Jews, were partial to the Egyptian cause, so that the possibility of a "fifth column" was ever present. Antiochus was therefore faced with a grave situation, and perhaps the only way in which he could hope to meet it was to impose by force a unity which he could not create by persuasion. Moreover, the campaign against Egypt had put a strain on his finances, and the treasures of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem offered a source of replenishment. What he did was simply to commandeer, in the interests of the state, a particular section of the national wealth; and it may even be supposed that a further motive was to prevent the possible use of this wealth to assist his foes.*

All of this does not mean, of course, that Antiochus did not treat the Jews with extreme harshness and barbarity; the records state that his confiscation of the Temple treasures (in 169 B.C.E.) was accompanied by a massacre of some forty thousand Jews in Jerusalem alone. The point is, however, that his measures were dictated by political expediency and not by hostility to Jews or Judaism *per se,* so that the conventional portrayal of him as a mere bloodthirsty anti-Semite is, once again, a serious distortion of history. As a matter of fact, the measures which Antiochus directs against the Jews were directed also against other national

*The background of Antiochus' policies is admirably sketched in H. L. Jansen's monograph *Die Politik des Antiochos IV* (Oslo: Det Norske Videnskafs-Akademi, 1943).

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groups. The Samaritans, for example, were likewise obliged to turn over their temple on Mount Gerizim to the cult of Zeus; while at Daphne even the Greek Apollo had—apparently—to take second place beside the new national god. The policy inaugurated by the monarch was based on what he conceived to be the stern necessities of a political situation, not on mere racial bigotry, and the proscription of distinctive Jewish practices was motivated not by ideological opposition to them but by the urgent need of consolidating a diverse and polyglot population in the face of a national emergency. It is important to draw a distinction—all too often ignored—between primary and incidental oppression, to avoid judging motives by effects, and to realize that many forms of suffering which Jews undergo are no more the products of discrimination or anti-Semitism than is an epidemic or a railroad disaster which happens to claim Jews among its victims.

IF, THEN, the conventional picture is distorted, and Chanukah does not in fact celebrate a victory of Hebraism over Hellenism, or a mass uprising of the Jews against the principle of totalitarianism, or a triumphant resistance to anti-Semitic bigotry, what does the festival celebrate? What is its permanent and universal value, and what relevance has it for the present day? The answer is implicit in the analysis which we have given above, for although our examination of the problem may have seemed, at first glance, unduly negative, it in fact issues in positive conclusions. These may be stated briefly under three heads.

First: Chanukah commemorates and celebrates the first serious attempt in history to proclaim and champion the principle of religio-cultural diversity in the nation. The primary aim of the Maccabees was, as we have seen, to preserve their own Jewish identity and to safeguard for Israel the possibility of continuing its traditional mission. Though inspired, however, by the particular situation of their own people, their struggle was instinct with universal implications. For what was really being defended was the principle that in a diversified society the function of the state is to embrace, not subordinate, the various constituent cultures, and that the complexion and character of the state must be determined by a natural process of fusion on the one hand and selection on the other, and not by the arbitrary imposition of a single pattern on all elements.

Seen from this point of view, therefore, Chanukah possesses broad human significance and is far more than a mere Jewish national celebration. As a festival of liberty, it celebrates more than the independence of one people—it glorifies the right to freedom of all peoples.

Second: Chanukah affirms the universal truth that the only effective answer to oppression is the intensified *positive* assertion of the principles and values which that oppression threatens. What inspired the movement of the Maccabees was not simply an abstract and academic dislike of tyranny but a desire to safeguard and evince an identity and way of life which was in danger of extinction. It therefore consisted not only in a fight *against* Antiochus but also in a fight *for* Judaism, the military uprising going hand in hand with an almost fanatical crusade for the internal regeneration of the Jewish people.

The combination was not fortuitous nor was it due solely—as some scholars have asserted—to the pressure of the pietists whom Mattathias and Judah rallied to their cause. On the contrary, it was fundamental. For the Maccabees, the Jews were a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, a society of men dedicated to attesting the presence of God and to exemplifying his law and dispensation on earth. It was for the continuance of this religious-ethical mission as God's witnesses that they were primarily fighting, and the struggle for civil rights was merely a means to this high purpose. The real issue at stake was not the right of the Jews to be like everyone else, but their right to be different; and victory meant not the attainment of civic equality (which, after all, was what Antiochus was offering!) but the renewal, after

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its forced suspension, of that particular and distinctive way of life which embodied and exemplified the Jewish mission. The mark of that victory, therefore, was not a triumphal parade but an act of dedication—the cleansing of the defiled Temple. Moreover, when the Jews wished to perpetuate the memory of their achievement, what they chose to turn into an annual festival was not the day of some military success but the week in which the House of God had been cleansed and the fire rekindled on the altar. There is an important meaning in this, one feels, for our own day, and especially in connection with the problem of safeguarding civil rights.

Third: Chanukah "teaches the value of the few against the many, of the weak against the strong, of passion against indifference, of the single unpopular voice against the thunder of public opinion. The struggle which it commemorates was the struggle of a small band, not of a whole people; and it was a struggle not only against oppression from without but equally against corruption and complacence within. It was a struggle fought in the wilderness and in the hills; and its symbol is appropriately a small light kindled when the shadows fall."* This is a festival glorifying not the mass, but the dedicated few.

IT CANNOT be denied that Chanukah possesses certain militant, revolutionary undertones, and these have often conspired to create around it a certain atmosphere of embarrassment. During the time of the Roman administration, for example, there were not wanting those who considered it imprudent, even dangerous, for the Jewish minority openly to observe a festival celebrating rebellion against a ruling power; and it is significant that Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, the compiler of the Mishnah, tried desperately to suppress any reference to Chanukah, even as he sought also to minimize the importance of Purim, another occasion purportedly commemorating victory over an alien sovereign.

A curious reflection of this attitude may be seen in the prominence which has come to be attached to the Chanukah lights. These lights are not even mentioned in the Books of the Maccabees. Modern scholars are therefore inclined to think that they had originally nothing whatsoever to do with the festival but, like the candles at Christmas, represent only an adaptation of the familiar pagan custom of lighting candles or kindling fires at the winter solstice as a means of reluming the decadent sun (see my article "What the Feast of Booths Celebrates," in COMMENTARY, October 1952). The significant thing is, however, that embarrassment over the more militant aspects of Chanukah caused the Jews to seize upon this purely secular and even heathen custom, Judaizing it by an appropriate legend, in order to divert attention into more innocuous quarters. (*Mutatis mutandis,* it is as if the Catholic Church, nervous about the implications of the Christmas story, had officially substituted the Yule log for the cradle in the manger as the symbol of the day when Jesus was born.)

Nevertheless, with characteristic genius, the Jews made of this originally foreign and heathen custom the most fitting symbol of the festival's real message; for the lights were taken to represent the Temple candelabrum which Judah and his followers had rekindled, and thus came to epitomize the truth that Chanukah is not simply the V-day of the national victory of the Maccabees but essentially a feast of dedication. What had originally symbolized the mere physical regeneration of the sun, or of nature, from year to year, was thus transmuted into a symbol of revival on the *spiritual* plane, becoming indeed, as our fathers told us, a brave light in a naughty world.

Nor is it only the ancient sages who have had qualms about the Chanukah story. Modern readers of it have likewise felt a certain awkward and embarrassing inconsistency between the Maccabees' zeal for Jewish rights and their intolerant persecu-

*Quoted from the present writer's *Purim and Hanukkah in Custom and Tradition* (New York, 1950).

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tion of those who happened to disagree with their outlook; the forced circumcision of Jewish infants, for example, seems strangely incongruous with the championship of freedom of belief. The explanation, however, is very simple: we must not read modern ideas and ideals into an ancient story. At the time of the Maccabees, the modern concept of personal liberty of conscience had not yet been developed, and religion was a collective regimen rather than an individual persuasion. Accordingly, what the Maccabees were out to defend was not the right of every individual to worship God in his own way, but rather the mission of Israel as a collective unit to serve as God's witnesses and to exemplify his Torah. Those who refused to accept this obligation were therefore just as much enemies of their cause as were any foreign oppressors, so that the Maccabees' policy towards them, however distasteful it may seem by later standards, was at the time both logical and consistent. Our modern revulsion at this policy is simply an example of the way the insights and perspectives of subsequent ages often call into question the ideals underlying traditional institutions. The right to diversity within the Jewish group is a later development in Judaism, and one, incidentally, which at this juncture in our own history seems to require reassertion, and perhaps especially at Chanukah time and against the Chanukah zealots.

HOWEVER it is interpreted, and no matter where the emphasis is placed, the significance of Chanukah for the modern Jew stems from the story of the Maccabees and depends on the tradition that it was founded by them to commemorate the triumph of their cause and the rededication of the Temple in 165 B.C.E. Modern scholars have suspected, however, that the real origin of the festival may lie elsewhere—possibly even in a more ancient pagan institution which the Jews adopted and then rationalized by this story.

A favorite starting point for such speculation is the fact that in the Second Book of Maccabees (1:9), when the Jews of Jerusalem exhort their brethren in Egypt to adopt the annual celebration of Chanukah, they describe it as "the Festival of Booths in the month of Kislev." This has suggested to some authorities that Chanukah was in origin simply a "postponed Succoth," and support for this view is drawn from the express statement in that same book that Judah and his followers "kept the eight days with rejoicing in the manner of the Feast of Booths . . . carrying wands wreathed with green and seasonable branches and palms" (10:7-8). The true explanation of these puzzling phrases would seem, however, to be quite different. The fact is that both the First and Second Temples had been dedicated at the Feast of Booths (see I Kings 8:2, 65; Nehemiah 8:13-18), and in order to dramatize the occasion, Judah and his followers made a point of copying the traditional ritual of that festival when they cleansed and *re*dedicated the sacred edifice. Accordingly, when the Jews of Jerusalem described the festival as "the Feast of Booths in the month of Kislev" their words are not to be taken literally but mean simply "the December version of Succoth."

Another view starts from the Chanukah lights, fanning them indeed into a veritable blaze. This view, which has recently been developed and elaborated, with characteristic brilliance and ingenuity, by Dr. Julian Morgenstern of Hebrew Union College, claims that back of Chanukah there lies a pagan festival of either the autumn equinox or the winter solstice, both of which occasions were (and still are) marked in many parts of the world by the lighting of candles or fires. In that case, the resemblance to the equinoctial Feast of Booths (when, according to the Mishnah, bonfires and torches were indeed lit in Jerusalem) would, of course, have readily sprung to mind, and this would sufficiently account for the description of the festival as "Booths in Kislev." There is, however, a very obvious objection to this view, and it was stated clearly many years ago by that redoubtable student of ancient religions, Professor Martin Nilsson: Chanukah is determined by the *lunar* calendar,

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whereas equinoxes and solstices depend, of course, on a *solar* reckoning; accordingly, there is no assurance that Chanukah will in fact coincide with either event.

Lastly, there is the present writer's theory which, while accepting the historicity of the traditional account, suggests that the peculiar form of celebration which Judah and his followers chose was motivated not only by a desire to imitate the dedication of the First and Second Temples at Succoth but also to satirize the contemporaneous Greek festival of the Rural Dionysia. This festival fell towards the end of December. In many places it was observed only in alternate years, and it took the form of a wild revel. Following a period of "purification," the celebrants donned the skins of fawns or foxes, wreathed their heads with ivy leaves, carried in their hands wands bound with green leaves and topped with pine cones, and rushed out to the hills where, in the glare of torches, they passed the night in frenzied dances and in the singing of hymns. Every now and again, they would dip their torches into water or wine so that they might sizzle for a moment and then burst into brighter blaze, thereby symbolizing the fiery nature of Dionysus and of the new light which was believed to dawn upon the world whenever he appeared among men.

When this picture is kept in mind, the subtlety of Judah's parody becomes immediately apparent. "The preliminary purifications found their counterpart in the cleansing and purifying of the House of God from the contamination of the pagans themselves; the festal parade, in the procession of pilgrims around the altar; the carrying of wreathed wands, in the bearing of the *lulab*; the wild shouts, in the chanting of psalms; the blazing torches, in the relumed candelabrum. And the point of the satire was not lost upon a later generation. The writer of the Second Book of Maccabees takes pains to drive it home with a number of extra touches. The services of God, he says, were now resumed *after a lapse of two years*—a statement which combines fidelity to fact with a sly dig at the biennial revels of Dionysus. The participants, he observes, felt a distinct sense of relief at being no more obliged to live in the hills like wild beasts—again a sly allusion to the votaries of Dionysus, who were perfectly content to abide there clad in the likeness of foxes and fawns. The hymns, he adds, were songs of praise to God for having prospered the purification of His place—words in which we may detect a caustic reference to the preliminary 'purifications' of the worshippers of Dionysus. Jehovah—runs the implication—earned the thanks of His people for helping them to clear away from His shrine the filth of the 'purified' pagans. Lastly, with a sidelong glance at the 'new light' kindled in so bizarre a fashion by the ecstatic followers of the heathen god, our author dryly but wryly throws out the observation that the fire needed for the service of Jehovah was obtained by the purely natural process of striking flints!"*

Whether any of these theories is right cannot now be known; all of them are based on deductions from fragmentary and inconclusive evidence. But they are not mere academic trivialities; for if any one of them is vindicated, it will shed important light on how, in the course of the ages, the festival has developed and been transmuted by the Jewish genius, and that development and transmutation into a religious and humanistic festival of broad universal meaning is an integral part of its significance. At the moment, however, we must simply wait for more light of the kind that comes from further knowledge and commentary, and new insights. Perhaps, after all, there is a profound lesson in the fact that the Chanukah lights increase from day to day and that their full radiance is achieved only by gradual stages through the centuries.

*Quoted from *op. cit., Purim and Hanukkah in Custom and Tradition.*

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HOW TOTALITARIANS GAIN ABSOLUTE POWER

The Key: Casting Out "Enemy Groups" from Society

PAUL KECSKEMETI

NOW that we are past our first numbed reactions to the horrors of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, an act of intellect is required. What is the meaning of these horrors? Are they an inevitable and logical outcome of the history of our Western civilization, or a product of unique accidents? May we expect them to be limited to the Central and East European plain, or are the countries of the North Atlantic equally susceptible?

Certainly, to answer these questions the most searching investigation into the origins and practices of totalitarianism is required. Such an examination was initiated in Hannah Arendt's superb book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. But the "origins" of which she speaks add up to a single basic tendency in Western society as a whole. She sees the totalitarian tragedy arising out of a vast process of disintegration, involving the decay of traditional monarchy, the rise and fall of the national state, the advent of imperialism, the transformation of integrated social groups into masses, Western man's loss of his spiritual home, his bewilderment in a new social world in which nothing has meaning and hence "everything is possible."

All this is surely relevant to the rise of totalitarianism. I feel, however, that in addition to these "Origins" with a capital O, we also need to look into more immediate, lower-case "origins" which would explain why full-fledged totalitarianism arose at certain times, in certain places, and not at other times in other places. Why are Russia and Germany the only two countries that developed a complete totalitarian system? The general background of Western civilization is only—a background. It leaves unanswered the question: how was it possible for a particular political organization, the Single Party, to attain absolute power in those great states? How was it possible for it to exercise such complete and arbitrary discretion in deciding who was to live and who to die, who was to be "accepted" and who was to be labeled "outlaw" and cast out from society?

THOUGH it would be impossible to imagine such a degree of subservience and unanimity as prevails in the totalitarian society without perfectly ruthless application of force by the power-holders, totalitarianism did not come into being simply through use of violence by a malevolent minority. Before the Single Party could achieve control, there had to be, on the one hand, desperate people who could see hope only in a quick, radical social transformation, and on the other, "conservatives" who so yearned for order

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IF Communism has turned out to be Nazism's twin, we now realize that this happened because, in addition to being Russian, and authoritarian, and imperial, it, too, had become totalitarian. What is the nature of this social component that has sprung almost full-blown upon an astonished world twice in a single generation? Is it the resurrection, as so many said when we first saw it in Germany, of medieval, and pre-medieval, ways of thinking? Is it the product of the decline of our Western society? Or is it the inevitable fruit of the gigantic, modern industrial state? And if so, which of us is immune? PAUL KECSKEMETI is a philosopher and social scientist on the staff of Rand, an independent research organization, where he is engaged in studies of totalitarianism. He contributed an article, "Prejudice in the Catastrophic Perspective," to our March 1951 COMMENTARY, which many readers told us was one of the most suggestive pieces of social thinking they had ever read. His book *Meaning, Communication, and Value* has just been published by the University of Chicago Press.

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and stability that to get these they were willing to disarm all opponents of the fanatics and desperadoes. It would seem that the Single Party could only consolidate its power when the social forces working for *change* converged with the social forces of *inertia* in crushing and disarming all opposition. This may be called the paradox of totalitarian usurpation.

In "normal" times, the forces of conservatism, of inertia, are strong enough to hold the forces of extreme radicalism in check. When, however, a very large contingent of the members of society is "mobilized" for total change, many conservatives will fall in behind them. But under what conditions will a substantial section of society be "mobilized" for radical change under the leadership of a group claiming the unique prerogatives of the totalitarian party? The answer is that this will happen only if the society is in a *traumatic* condition. The only true totalitarian regimes we know can be traced back to a historic trauma: the First World War.

What is a societal trauma? A catastrophe experienced by a society assumes "traumatic" proportions if, for some reason, it cannot be assimilated or taken in stride as part of the order of things. In warlike ages and cultures, a war is not traumatic; to become so, it must be unanticipated, it must be morally shocking in the highest degree, and it must have a character of irreversibility—engulfing more and more areas of society, until nobody can see a possible escape.

When a society is in a state of trauma, the stage is set for a "savior" to appear. The combination of moral revulsion and abject fear inclines men to the belief that the process can only be reversed by annihilating those who are responsible for it. Thus, the first step on the road to totalitarian power is to define and isolate a small, iniquitous minority, so that the strongest opponent of this minority can offer his promises of redemption.

When such a "savior" enters upon the scene, he is not completely unknown. In his early career, the leader of a totalitarian movement is known as a deviant and isolate, head of a small and raging sect that practically nobody takes seriously. But during this pre-history, the future savior acquires a moral capital which will be of inestimable value later: he will have defined and identified an "iniquitous minority" of "public enemies." Once society has suffered a trauma, the former sectarian and isolate may be vindicated as a prophet. People remember his denunciations and warnings, and many accept his diagnosis of the evil which must be cast out. The would-be savior will acquire a large number of faithful followers. If he is a skillful demagogue, he will do his utmost to identify himself with those ideas that have the greatest resonance in his society: inspiring and altruistic ideals as well as dreams of aggrandizement and plunder. Few will either dare or care to reject him completely and unreservedly, for the whole point of his rhetoric is that only knaves and traitors can be against him and his redeeming mission. The "savior's" policy is so to manage things that only the "iniquitous minority," and those fully identified with it, will be openly against him. If and when he succeeds in this, he will be in a position to seize complete control, either because all important groups are against the "iniquitous minority" (the czarist ruling class, in Russia), or because those who do not actively hate this minority do not consider its fate important enough to make an issue of it (the Jews, in Germany).

World War I was the great trauma of the Western world, and the totalitarian systems of the 20th century owe their existence to it, directly or indirectly.

The trauma of the war was particularly profound in Russia. The main reason for this was that World War I was a "total war," the first such in modern history. Now, a total war is far more destructive to a predominantly agricultural than to a predominantly industrial society. Total war means a war of long duration, gradually mobilizing all the resources of society for war purposes.

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Such a progressive mobilization, however, means something fundamentally different in the industrial and in the agricultural sectors. Industrial mobilization, with all the hardships it involves, at least signifies full employment of people and resources; the industrial population by no means loses its economic basis of existence (unless industrial bombing becomes a feature of total war, but in World War I this was not the case). In the agricultural sector, particularly if it is a primitive, non-mechanized one, mobilization means that the productive forces—men and horses—are taken out of production and used for non-productive purposes. If the war is short, this can be assimilated. But if the war is long and mobilization total, the rhythm of mobilization will overtake the reproductive cycle of men and animals, and the economic basis of rural existence must decay.

This trauma hit rural Russia with elementary force in 1917: revolution broke out when, in the fourth year of war, the new planting season was approaching and a fresh wave of mobilization was in the offing. This made it simply impossible for the rural masses of soldiers to continue active fighting. The impact of Lenin's propaganda, denouncing the war as a supreme crime concocted by imperialists and profiteers, was tremendous. This description made abundant sense to the ordinary Russian: for was it not a fact that when ordinary people had not enough to eat and had to endure the greatest hardships, the rich were as rich as ever and the mighty lost nothing? It was precisely because the trauma was war itself, and not a peacetime economic depression of the Marxist pattern (from which all classes suffer to some degree), that a "Marxist" interpretation, setting off a small circle of "profiteers" against the large mass of the "toilers," proved so convincing. It is by no means a mere historical irony that Marxism became dominant in a primitive agricultural country rather than in the industrial societies for which Marx had prophesied it.

In Germany, things were entirely different. The trauma which eventually resulted in Hitler's coming to power was, not the war as such, but defeat. The German people perfectly "understood" the war and they accepted progressive mobilization; what they did not understand was how they could be defeated. Or rather, they could understand it only as the work of criminal conspirators, internal enemies. Hitler defined and isolated this group of criminals, this "iniquitous minority"—he named the Jews. It was essential for the eventual success of his "redeeming mission" to designate a very small minority in a precarious social position as "public enemy by definition." It would not have been possible in Germany effectively to outlaw and isolate any other group.

But Hitler's first crusades against the Jews were rather unsuccessful. The reason was that the trauma of defeat slowly receded in the first years after the war. Only fresh disasters could reinforce it, and the runaway inflation of 1923, though certainly catastrophic to large groups, was not traumatic enough—an inflation is in many ways less terrifying to society as a whole than a depression is, for while it completely ruins certain groups, it benefits others, and it does not paralyze production. The depression and unemployment of 1930-32, however, had a fully traumatic character of irreversibility. It was a process of "progressive immobilization," the reverse of "progressive mobilization," but no less terrifying. As this seemingly irreversible process was unfolding, Hitler used the opportunity to claim vindication as a prophet: had he not always predicted that the German people would be "destroyed" by Germany's defeat, as implemented by the Versailles treaty, for which the Jews were responsible?

Since their traumatic origin was so dissimilar, German and Russian totalitarianism differed in many essential respects. While, in Russia, war-weariness organized the masses against the upper crust, in Germany the depression plunged many class groups into anxiety and despair; not only workers who feared unemployment but also farmers who feared dispossession, and large elements

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of the middle and upper class who feared *déclassement*. To a large extent Hitler used, for his "redeeming mission," the energy supplied by groups that were afraid of being pushed down and saw enemies "below" as well as "above." This explains the "fascist" features of his movement.

Yet, despite this and other differences, both regimes developed, as they unfolded, a unique relationship between rulers and ruled. This relationship is the essence of totalitarianism.

WHEN we consider the vast, arbitrary power which the inner circle of the rulers wield in the totalitarian society, and the defenselessness of the citizens in face of the political authorities, one is tempted to define this relationship as a kind of slavery. Sociologically speaking, however, this definition would be wrong. Though the term "slavery" covers, in actual fact, a wide variety of conditions of life, one thing seems to be common to all of them: the slave, because of the peculiar status which sets him off against "free" persons, must consider himself as a "tool"; he has no independent existence in civil society; his existence is submerged in that of the master or owner, who may be another human being, or a public corporation like the state, or the temple of some god. The nature of this relationship is such that the slave can take no initiative for himself. Someone whom he has to obey blindly will set for him tasks to perform.

Now the situation of the private individual in totalitarian society is completely different. No institutional arrangement subordinates him to a private or corporate owner who can and will instruct him in concrete terms as to what he is to do. In a sense, he is a responsible agent; he must make decisions for himself. Not that he is free to make many decisions without grave risk; on the contrary, he must always be careful not to run afoul of a supreme power that can crush him. But this power is remote and invisible. If "blind obedience" is expected from the citizen of the totalitarian state, it is not obedience to any person. Indeed, whom *could* he obey blindly? The Supreme Leader? Impossible, since the Leader does not give orders to the individual citizens. Some sub-leader appointed by the Supreme Leader? Impossible again, for any sub-leader may turn out to be a traitor or at least a blunderer, and then all those who have obeyed him "blindly" must share in the blame he incurs. The individual citizen in the totalitarian state lacks the means of orientation available to the slave who can know in every case whose orders he must obey and *what* these orders are. The power which the citizen of a totalitarian state has to obey and propitiate is in many ways like the power of nature: inscrutable, inexorable, and quick to reward or punish, whether compliance was within one's power or not.

In contrast to a slave society, there is in the totalitarian regime just one normal status of citizenship for every individual. The catch is simply—and this is the point upon which totalitarian domination rests—that this status can be arbitrarily revoked by an authority which has unlimited discretion. This prospect is indeed a frightening one. For loss of civil existence means that a person is declared to be a public enemy, and must be treated as such by every member of the community. He has no rights, no protection from any kind or degree of aggression, no opportunity to consort on equal terms with anyone except other outcasts. Further, the monopolistic discretion asserted by the authorities in the matter of designating "public enemies" means that those cast in this role cannot defend themselves. To plead innocence would compound their crime, for such a plea would merely be another attack upon the authorities.

What makes outlawry so dreaded is not merely the physical suffering it entails; it is, above all, the implication that the outcast must be considered by everyone as an enemy, a malignant wrecker, one who has forfeited his place in human society. It is easy to see that power based upon the possibility of putting the individual into the category of public enemies is in a way more awesome

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and more complete than the power wielded by the master over the slave. The master can take his slave's life, but the totalitarian authority can take from the citizen things worth more than life.

The totalitarian society, then, is not a community of masters and slaves, but one of "good" and "bad," "deserving" and "harmful," "honored" and "dishonored" individuals, with one organ of this society being fully empowered to decide who will belong to one or the other category. The power-holders are thus not "masters," as they are in an aristocratic society. Their authority is not based upon some quality or title vested in them, but on service rendered to the community, a service supposed to be as immense and providential as the outcasts' crime is supposed to be black and pernicious. Those at the top must be considered by the citizenry not as masters but as saviors. The Single Party, which wields supreme power, is defined as an organ of redemption for the society. Whatever the Party decides is by the same token part of the work of redemption. Whatever act is declared by the Party to run counter to its aims thereby becomes the supreme crime; and to be accused of it by the Party is tantamount to condemnation.

This monopoly in determining everybody's status, which arises logically from the special conditions under which the Party took power, does not exist from the first moment the Party achieves control. It is acquired by a gradual process in the course of which the concept of "public enemy," at first attached to a rigidly circumscribed class of people, becomes more flexible so that it can embrace more and more kinds of individuals.

In every totalitarian society, we can distinguish two basic categories of "public enemies": the "public enemies by definition," against whom the Party's "redeeming mission" is originally directed; and the "public enemies by assimilation," who somehow come to share the stigma borne by the former group although they do not belong to it. Complete totalitarian domination is achieved only when the second group is added to the first, that is, when the Party succeeds in putting all opponents or potential opponents of its "mission" on an equal footing with the original "public enemies." At the beginning of this process, a rather narrowly circumscribed minority is doomed and all others think that they are immune. At the end, nobody is immune: every "normal citizen" can be transformed into a "public enemy."

The "public enemies by definition" are the members of the "anti-society," the "iniquitous minority" whose members enjoyed "monstrous privileges" in the social system which the Party overthrew. The "redeeming mission" of the Party, as originally defined, consisted of smashing the social system in which "everybody" is oppressed and exploited to the sole advantage of the "iniquitous minority," the "bloodsuckers." For the Bolsheviks, the "public enemies by definition" were the members of the ruling strata of czarist society. For the Nazis, "public enemies by definition" were simply the Jews.*

Nothing can be more dissimilar than Russian society during the early stages of Bolshevik rule and Germany in the first years after Hitler's accession to power. In the first, we have chaos, civil war, the collapse of industrial and agricultural production, unbridled experimentation with new forms of administration; in the second, large economic facilities in good working order, though partly unused due to the severe depression, firmly established authorities, a rigidly disciplined society. Yet, in spite of many differ-

*This assertion is meant in the sense that the Jews, and the Jews alone, were a category of people whom the Nazis proposed to outlaw and banish from society as a mass. They alone were labeled as an anti-society, as people who had no right to exist, no matter how they behaved. Communists, socialists, militant Catholics, professing Protestants, and many other groups also were "public enemies," but not in the sense that the entire rank and file of these groups was to be cast out from society *en bloc*. With these last-named groups, terrorism was applied only to leaders and activists. With the "public enemy by definition," such a distinction between activists and rank and file is meaningless: every member of the group is the object of terror.

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ences in detail, and in spite of the different ideological basis for the selection of the "public enemy," we can discern analogous principles applied in the early treatment of the "public enemies." In both cases, the main thing was the exclusion of the "public enemies" from legitimate pursuits, the encouragement of verbal, economic, and physical aggression against them, and the denial to them of civil protection and the right of self-protection.

In Russia, there was more physical violence and more terrorism applied against the "public enemy" during the early phase. Moreover, in large parts of the country, the "Whites" were in control and they in turn used terror and violence against the Bolsheviks. In Germany, the process was, in the beginning, more orderly, less violent, and far more one-sided. The Jews were not deprived of all rights and all means of livelihood at one stroke. Until November 1938, they remained active in some walks of life, and they could legally own property. But in one respect, they were treated like "public enemies" without reservation right from the beginning: they were denounced and held up to public hatred and scorn by all official spokesmen of the regime and by all organs of public opinion, and not a word could be said in public in their defense and in refutation of even the most ludicrous charges made against them. Thus, their moral annihilation was completed even before their economic and physical annihilation began.

For both the Bolsheviks and the Nazis, it was important to create the impression, prior to and immediately after their seizure of power, that all those not tagged as "public enemies by definition" would form just one big family. The Jews set apart, there remained in Germany only the "*Volksgemeinschaft*." The bourgeoisie eliminated, there remained in Russia only the "workers and peasants," with the "toiling intelligentsia" added as an afterthought. In this way, the Party could both win a maximum number of adherents and allies among those who had grievances, and disarm the inactive mass by creating the impression that terror and outlawry would remain selective, applicable only to the original "public enemies." If, in spite of the theoretically postulated "family solidarity" that was supposed to prevail in the society cleansed of the "public enemy by definition," the Party still had open opponents, these could be discredited as allies and helpers of the "iniquitous minority"—as, in other words, "public enemies by assimilation." They were traitors who deliberately destroyed bliss and harmony in the family by taking sides with the enemy. The early concentration of the attack upon "public enemies by definition" thus performed for the Single Party the essential function of enabling it to label all opposition as illegitimate and treasonable.

IN DEALING with the different categories of "public enemies," different techniques were used. As for "public enemies by definition," descent from members of a specified group was what set them apart, not only in Germany where they were defined in "racial" terms, but also in Russia where they were defined in "class" terms. In Germany, one had to have only Aryan grandparents; in Russia, one had to have proletarian parents. With regard to such people, disqualified by origin, the imposition of severe civic disabilities, combined with individual cases of terrorism, was deemed appropriate and sufficient.

With "traitors," the "public enemies by assimilation," outlawing had to be effected by different methods. They could not be set apart and expelled from the community by tagging them for what they "were" by descent. It was what they *did* that mattered, and this one could not see just by looking at them. Their crime required harsh and sweeping administrative reprisals, and immediate physical segregation from the community. It was also expedient to render them, as it were, invisible. This corresponded to the myth of family solidarity: all who remained visible were members in good standing; the solidarity of the family was broken only by people who, as Hannah Arendt puts it, "never existed at all." This formula never applied to the original "public

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enemies by definition" as a group—the bourgeoisie in Russia, the Jews in Germany. Far from pretending that the bourgeoisie never existed at all, the Bolsheviks saw it everywhere even after it had been virtually liquidated; and the Nazis did likewise with the Jews. The "public enemy by definition" had to be seen where he was not. The "public enemy by assimilation" had to be invisible wherever he was.

It did, of course, require some effort to make it plausible that the "traitors" were in league with, and carried on the nefarious business of, the "public enemies by definition." To achieve this, the Bolsheviks developed the category of "objective" class enemies, that is, people who considered themselves "subjectively" proletarians and toilers but "objectively" were on a par with the capitalists. The Bolsheviks also made copious use of *ad hoc* theories to prove that opponents and rivals of the leadership were spies and paid agents of the foreign enemy. The Nazis seldom resorted to this type of defamation (I remember only one classic example, Hitler's sinister remark about General von Schleicher having met the French ambassador to "talk about the weather"), but in a sense, they also operated with the concept of people who were "objectively" Jews. In fact, all anti-Nazis, whether Marxists, liberals, or Christian believers, were "objectively" Jews, since their doctrinal beliefs were invariably of "Jewish" origin.

THERE is one further essential point about the "public enemies by assimilation" which has particular relevance to Soviet totalitarianism. This is the evolution of this concept after all open opposition had disappeared. Originally, the designation of "public enemy by assimilation" covers real and open opponents, people who actually challenge the Single Party's bid for power. As long as things are at this stage, it is still possible for the non-political bulk of the population to feel secure and to be convinced that outlawry would never affect them. But *after* all opposition had been suppressed, both in Germany and in Soviet Russia, terrorism became more inclusive instead of more selective, and outlawry was applied against people who neither belonged to the category of "public enemies by definition" nor in any way opposed the Party.

The main reason for this is not far to seek. Once it is postulated that all opposition is illegitimate and treasonable, and that the outlawry of "public enemies" is imperative until there is complete unanimity, the technique of terror and outlawry *must* perpetuate itself. For unanimity cannot be the spontaneous, permanent state of *any* social group. Even if nobody dares or wants to challenge fundamentals, there is bound to be disagreement about specific policies, which inevitably have a different effect on people in different positions. Rivalry and competition for positions of leadership also are sure to emerge. As a consequence, freedom to criticize, to complain, and to press for changes cannot be granted even the members of the "redeemed" and purified community. For who knows where this would end? Why, people might even make comparisons with the past; black may appear somewhat less black, and white somewhat less white, than the "saviors" had painted it. Such ideas, however, strike at the very heart of the Party's "redeeming mission," and the Party's power would crumble if they were freely propagated.

Unless the Party of "saviors" wants to abdicate, then, it must continue to apply the technique of outlawry, this time against "insiders." A party of "saviors" cannot remain in power unless it treats all dissent, whether due to personal rivalries, pressures of divergent interests, or simple disappointment and discouragement, as anti-social and treasonable. This calls for the constant creation of new categories of "public enemies by assimilation," so inclusive as to leave nobody immune. People must be educated to feel that anyone can become a public enemy, simply by virtue of being so designated by the Party or its control organs.

The technique of domination through the fear of outlawry is not adopted because "total domination" is the conscious aim but because

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it is the only technique possible once political control is established upon the basis of a "redeeming mission." It is not the diabolical ambition but the messianic pretension of the totalitarian ruler which turns him into the most complete tyrant known to history. In the case of Hitler, this distinction is not too important, because he wanted to be a "messiah" of the German warrior nation, and his "mission" aimed at military and political domination of other peoples. But in the case of Soviet totalitarianism, the differential diagnosis is crucial. We cannot understand the Soviet phenomenon if we assume that Lenin's original "mission," which was formulated in universalistic and humanitarian terms, but which had outlawry of the "enemies of mankind" as a corollary, was alien—either in substance or in causal, sociological relevance—to secret police rule in Russia.*

GRANTED that brutality and terror are bad things no matter who suffers by them, does it not make a tremendous qualitative difference on what basis "public enemies by definition" are selected? Is it justified to stress formal analogies between the roles played by the "bourgeoisie" in Russia and the Jews in Germany as "public enemies," without going into the "merits" of the case made against them? After all—so many socialists and liberals might argue—a revolutionary campaign against an exploiting upper class partakes of the essence of social "justice," whereas the outlawing of people on account of race or religion is a supreme "injustice." In the one case, we have to do with bad methods applied in a just cause, whereas in the other, both the cause and the methods are bad without reservation. Is this not a difference of day and night, more important than the formal analogies?

That the selection of the "public enemy" in the case of Soviet Russia originally had more justification, both morally and intellectually, than in that of Nazi Germany, may be conceded easily. The heart of the matter, however, is the intellectual and moral quality of totalitarian control itself. Once there has been erected an image of the ruler as "savior," and a counter-image of the "public enemy" as anyone defined as such by the ruler, it makes no difference whether the "savior" combats a "real" social evil or a contrived one, or whether he "really" improves things or makes them worse. The outlawry of personally guiltless people is no more pardonable if it is practiced in the name of a "progressive" moral outlook than if it is practiced in the name of mere boorish prejudice or an out-and-out despicable myth. It might even be argued that the moral and intellectual harm is greater, if possible, in the former case than in the latter. The pure hatemonger and the myth-maker, being apparently beyond redemption, are also beyond corruption. But if the passion for social justice and betterment is turned into persecution, and if a scientific and philosophical analysis of society like the liberal critique of *l'ancien régime* is turned into dogma, something that might have been noble and great has been degraded. And this always happens when the champions of social justice adopt the technique of outlawry.

There is no difference of day and night here. Outlawry in the "good" cause is no better than—and ultimately no different from—outlawry in the "bad" cause.

BUT then: could this analysis not be applied just as well to our own case, and to that of any democratic society which defends itself against totalitarian subversion from without and within? Is the defense of any free society not something like a "redeeming action" directed against a designated group of "public enemies"? And, if that is so, are we not to expect that, as the

*By the same token, the recent development in Russia and the satellite countries of attacks on Jews as being "cosmopolite" or "Zionist" traitors—for example, in the Slansky trial in Prague last month—would appear to be a consistent development of the doctrine of "public enemies by assimilation." See, for material on this development, the two articles in COMMENTARY: Solomon M. Schwarz, "The New Anti-Semitism of the Soviet Union" (June 1949), and Peter Meyer, "The Jewish Purge in the Satellite Countries" (August 1952).—ED.

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action proceeds, the original group of public enemies will be followed by "assimilated" public enemies, until a Single Party of "saviors" establishes its full-fledged, totalitarian rule?

Such fears are often expressed by liberals in Western societies. Apprehensive liberals like to draw alarming parallels between the rise of totalitarianism in Germany and Russia on the one hand, and the ultimate effects of anti-totalitarian repression in the West on the other. And those who draw such parallels could point to certain salient features of the preceding analysis as substantiating their fears. Has the shock of Communist danger, they might ask, not had a "traumatic" effect upon American society? And does repression of Communists and Communist sympathizers not often smack of "outlawry"?

We cannot enter here into a thoroughgoing discussion of the merits and the potential dangers of anti-Communist repression in the West and particularly in America. We may grant that anti-Communist action in America includes many things that are either irrational or inconsistent with democratic principles and mores. But it seems to me that this issue is confused rather than clarified by injecting the "deadly parallel" with totalitarianism into it. Whatever is wrong with certain anti-Communist practices and policies in America, it is not that they represent the initial stages of totalitarian rule, despite apparent parallelisms.

To begin with: the position of Communists in America is not the same as that of a group designated as an "iniquitous minority" and "public enemy by definition" under incipient totalitarianism. It is characteristic of the totalitarian technique that *an entire social category,* including its rank and file or "mass," is outlawed and banished from normal society. Every individual comprised in that stigmatized category is the object of measures of warfare; obscurity provides no safety. Repressive action against a *party* as such does not have such a comprehensive and indiscriminate character. It hits, not a social category, but an *organized action group,* and particularly its most visible exponents. The self-defense of society against action groups organized for subversion should not be confused with the outlawing of entire social categories whose removal from society is seen to be a condition of social redemption.

To be sure, injustices and excesses may also occur in defending society against subversive action groups. People may be hurt who are neither disloyal nor subversive; penalties may also be inflicted in arbitrary fashion, disregarding essential legal safeguards. While a free society has the right, and the obligation, to defend itself against subversion, it cannot, in waging this struggle, disregard its own basic legal principles without endangering its own freedom. Even if no full-fledged totalitarianism is likely to arise from such an undermining of constitutional principles and procedures, the danger is great enough to justify watchfulness.

According to the traditional liberal position, these dangers can be avoided if we take care to carry out the defense of society against subversion only within the framework of law enforcement. The law should define what actions are subversive, and repression should take the form of legal penalties meted out to those convicted under normal legal procedures of having violated this law.

This is in fact the dominant approach in American practice. American society prefers to deal with political dangers by making laws against them. I would not decry this approach; whenever society can rely on lawmaking to protect the integrity of its political institutions, that is all to the good. But I suggest that the problem of subversion cannot always be met by treating it solely as a legal one. For criminal law in general can be applied only against activities of isolated individuals. No matter how dangerous or reprehensible a certain type of behavior is, its legal repression becomes impossible as soon as it becomes endemic among enclaves of a society—even if the enclave represents only a minority.

There is a certain complacency and undue

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optimism in ignoring the "mass support" behind subversion and applying the laws only against the most conspicuous ringleaders. In doing so, we not only neglect an important part of the political problem posed by subversion; we also violate the spirit of the law. Any law is necessarily debased if it is applied selectively; if it is impossible to punish all those who violate a law, it becomes unjust to punish only some of them.

These considerations show how difficult a task it is to defend a free society against subversion. The problem would not be too grave if we had to worry only about highly visible ringleaders. But in fact, we must also worry about the rank and file that supports them. Against such groups, we cannot apply the law, because this is technically impossible. And of course, we *must* not resort to extra-legal "outlawry" against the subversive supporting group as a whole, because this would in fact open the road to totalitarianism, no matter how justified our original motives and intentions might be.

IN THE end, the question of how to deal effectively with subversives is not whether to pass or not pass a law; most of the current debate about civil rights and civil liberties in the struggle against subversion is sterile because, in concentrating on the legal approach, it ignores the real question. The solution is elsewhere: the task is, in fact, one of political struggle, and it is a difficult one. For it involves devising suitable tactics to counter Communist action in fields where the party really has the strength to hurt us. This means combating "ideas" with intellectual and spiritual weapons—and much more.

More often than not, the subversive leadership's hold upon the masses is due to manipulatory stratagems and organizational intrigue rather than to argument and persuasion. One of the problems we face is how to thwart covert Communist manipulation of certain social strata, for example of labor union members or progressive professionals and intelligentsia. Regulation by law may be helpful in this, but it cannot do the whole job. Clear, informed political understanding, and active, politically sophisticated leadership are required, and lines of argument and programs of action that take into account the greatest possible numbers of factors.

It would be fatal to assume that the administrative regulation of labor unions, or of educational or cultural agencies, can take the place of genuine anti-Communist majorities achieved by democratic means. It is all-important to insist upon a patient, specific, and democratic approach. Wholesale panic-mongering, the labeling, stigmatizing, and casting out of whole strata or groups, can lead us only to disaster. We will split rather than preserve our society if we allow anti-Communist action to degenerate into heresy-hunting and browbeating in the name of a streamlined orthodoxy. It would be the greatest triumph for Communism if we let our society be divided in this way.

Far from winning a victory, democracy suffers a defeat when minorities are found irredeemably disloyal and are cast out and penalized. Strengthening of the voluntary allegiance of people is the only real victory for democracy. If we can achieve this, we need not fear that our society will become totalitarian—either through failure to defend itself, or by sacrificing its freedom to the supposed requirements of self-defense.

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FREEDOM OR AUTHORITY IN GROUP LIFE?

Voluntary Agreements Work, Our Experience Teaches Us

OSCAR HANDLIN

IN THE heat of national conflict Americans have often found it useful to turn for insight to the lessons of their history. It may equally be valuable for American Jews to do so in the midst of the present sharply contested struggle within their community life.

In our society, instruments have been developed to provide for the people's welfare of a number, scale, and variety exceeding those of any other country. In much of this development, we have depended upon organizations created by the voluntary association of individuals with common interests rather than upon the operations of government; indeed, the total area of our social life in which government refrains from acting is immense. Such voluntary organizations exist, today as in the past, in an almost endless assortment, reflecting the vast diversity of our people and the wide range of religious, ethnic, and sectional ties that draw groups of us together.

Actually, the voluntary associations give form to the most important actions of our society, now as in the past. Yet the voluntary pattern did not come into being as the product of any premeditated plan or theory. It emerged erratically out of the practical necessities of life on a new continent, as men of different origins were thrust together and confronted the problems of cooperating freely with one another. There was often confusion as to purposes and uncertainty as to functions; and often Americans, some of them leading spirits in such associations, misunderstood the very nature of the institutions they were creating.

It is odd but true that it is the persisting *voluntary* character of these associations that has always evoked the bitterest controversies. Habituated as they were to the political technique involved in the electoral and governmental machineries of a democracy, some Americans were inclined to expect that the majority should rule everywhere, as it did in the operations of the state. But any effort to put that expectation to the test revealed that there was a difference between the member of a church or fraternal organi-

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FOR almost two years Jewish community life has been agitated by a debate over a proposed plan to alter the pattern of control and financing of community-relations activities, the large bulk of which has been the responsibility of two long-established communal agencies, the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, and the American Jewish Committee. The argument over the work of the specific agencies involved has become overshadowed by a new—and old—dispute over the authority to be vested in coordinating and centralizing agencies in Jewish life; and in turn this has flowered into a full-blown revival of the historic controversy as to whether the welfare needs of the American Jewish group might not be better met through a single over-all representative body empowered to speak for all Jews, and to control all Jewish communal organizations. OSCAR HANDLIN, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and a close student of the evolution of the communal life of Jewish and other religious and ethnic groups in America, focuses his attention in this article on this crucial and basic question, and gives his view as to which of the two positions being advocated seems more in consonance with American conditions and experience. COMMENTARY has published other articles on these questions in the past—we refer readers to Robert Gordis's article "Creating an Organic Community" (July 1950), and Mr. Handlin's articles "America Recognizes Diverse Loyalties" (March 1950) and "Group Life Within the American Pattern" (November 1949). We plan to publish other articles in the future, both on the general question of the organization of the American Jewish community, and on the specific problems affecting the work of Jewish intergroup relations agencies in this country.

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zation and the citizen of a state. The citizen, in the minority on a vote, had to agree to the actions of the majority; otherwise he would feel the force of the power of coercion available to the government. But the member of a voluntary association faced no such compulsion; against any majority he held always the right of withdrawal. Thus whatever power of action such groups enjoy derives first and last from the voluntary consensus of opinion among their adherents rather than through the establishment of a majority.

This quality, inherent in their very nature, accounts for the enormous variety of these associations, for the seeming disorder, overlapping, duplications, and confusion as to purpose, function, and jurisdiction that often characterize their operations. These deficiencies are the price of their spontaneity, freedom, and voluntary character; and considering the spirit they have engendered among the citizenry, and the resulting fruits of their efforts, the price to society cannot be thought high by any comparative standards obtaining in either government operations or commercial businesses.

IN THIS respect, the agencies through which the Jews act in the United States are altogether typical. The immigrants of the 18th and early 19th centuries did briefly attempt to reconstruct the institutions with which they had been familiar in Europe. There the Kahal ("Congregation") was at first endowed with a total jurisdiction over the community; it was concerned with philanthropy, with education, and with the personal and social life of its members as well as with God's worship. But the American environment soon narrowed the functions of the congregation to the purely religious, while all the other subjects of communal action fell into the hands of altogether autonomous bodies.

From time to time in the 19th century individuals did express dissatisfaction with the looseness and disorganization of Jewish life in the United States. But the occasional calls for some kind of representative body that would speak for all Jews and impose discipline on them came to nothing. Even on a local basis, it was not possible to create any form of central authority. On a national scale it was hopeless. When the American Jewish Committee was formed in 1906, it explicitly disavowed the intention of creating a congress on political parliamentary lines, or of representing anyone but its own members.

In the half-century that followed, however, there were a succession of attempts to establish such a central agency under a variety of forms. Those efforts were totally unsuccessful, but a vigorous group continues to further them. The agitated reception of Professor Robert MacIver's recent plan for the reconstruction of the National Community Relations Advisory Council was due in considerable part to the fact that the plan seemed to many, both of its supporters and its opponents, another such effort in the long series. Behind the bitter debate that ended only this fall in the rejection of the proposal by the chief agencies involved, there lurked the fear on the part of some, and the hope on the part of others, that this was the first step in the creation of an authoritative body representative of American Jews. It will be helpful in understanding those hopes and fears to turn back to review the pages of American Jewish communal history, and to review briefly the story of earlier moves in that direction.

IN THE negotiations that ultimately led to the formation of the American Jewish Committee in 1906, Dr. Judah L. Magnes had urged the new body to take a stronger position and to assume the wider responsibilities of a Jewish congress. Dissatisfied with the limited role the Committee actually marked out for itself, he came to feel that the organization he thought desirable could best grow out of the formation of local governing agencies in the important cities. In 1909, he took the lead in the establishment in New York of such a Kehillah.

Dr. Magnes clearly stated the purpose of the Kehillah. In an address to the organizational meeting, he pointed out that, "At the present time there is no representative, au-

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thoritative permanent organization that dare speak for the Jewish people," and he complained that consequently "any individual or organization" could "claim to be the spokesman of the Jews." The Kehillah in New York, and a similar body in Philadelphia, were to put an end to the "prevailing anarchy," at least locally.

The Kehillah never spread to other places; and indeed enjoyed only a short life in New York and in Philadelphia. But these initial tentative trials were symptomatic of the desire in some quarters for greater order and control in communal life.

The First World War offered the opportunity to bring that desire to fulfillment. In the three years while all the European great powers were engaged and the United States was still a neutral, American Jews acquired growing influence and responsibility. With the declaration of war against Germany, it became clear that this country would wield perhaps conclusive influence in determining the outcome of the struggle and the nature of the peace.

Jews certainly had a stake in both. Ferocious battles across the face of Eastern Europe had confronted many in Poland and Russia with immediate problems of relief and rehabilitation. And the treaties, which were to bring democracy and the rights of self-determination to areas of the world that had theretofore known little of either, would certainly have to take account of the needs of the Jews. This was altogether apart from the hope of many Jews that the final settlement would make room for Zionist aspirations in Palestine. It could persuasively be argued that the crisis of the war demanded some single, unified, authoritative body to speak for the Jews in dealings with the American and European governments that would determine the future political organization of a good part of the world.

The call of Dr. Magnes and of the New York Kehillah for the convocation of a congress of the America Jews therefore fell upon receptive ears. It was difficult in the face of these dramatic needs to resist the demand for concord and for directed effort.

The American Jewish Committee approached the idea of a congress with a good deal of hesitation. It was willing to cooperate in any feasible manner. But it insisted upon hedging its participation in such a conclave with two important reservations. First, it insisted that a congress, if it met, ought to devote itself to specific problems determined in advance. That is, the congress was not to be a representative assembly with general legislative powers, but rather a body limited to specific functions within the areas in which all the participants were in substantial agreement.

Furthermore, from the Committee's point of view, it followed that the congress was to be a temporary and not a permanent entity. Called into being by an immediate crisis, it was to dissolve as soon as the crisis was over and its functions ceased to exist. The Committee stood as firmly as ever, it made clear, on the principle that there was no place in America for anything like "a state within a state."

Although an acrimonious debate revealed the force of the divisions among American Jews, these limiting terms were finally accepted by the various groups that entered the American Jewish Congress formed in 1917. It was with that understanding that the American Jewish Committee took an active part in the labors of the next two years that helped to influence the formulation of the treaties dealing with Eastern Europe and with the situation of the Jews in the postwar world. It was certainly in accord with that understanding that the Congress officially dissolved in 1920 once the treaties were negotiated and its work was ended.

But there had always been a group within the Congress that held no such circumscribed view of its province. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, for instance, refused to acknowledge that this was no more than the *ad hoc* instrument of a specific purpose. He viewed it rather as a continuing organization that would ultimately constitute a general authority over Jewish life in the United States. At a rump meeting after the original Congress had passed out of existence, a group of likemind-

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ed individuals assumed the old name and continued to act under it, although with a form, and in a spirit, quite different from that which animated the original organization.

It was a logical extension of the position of those who now controlled the American Jewish Congress that "world Jewry" needed representation in the same way, although on another scale, as American Jewry. It followed, almost as a matter of course, that they created a World Jewish Congress in 1936—a supernational integrating body to coordinate the activities of Jews in every part of the world. In his autobiography, Dr. Wise describes this episode in a chapter entitled, "The Jewish People Lives."

Down to the middle of the 1930's, the American Jewish Congress did not absorb the loyalty of a very large portion of the Jews of the United States. It certainly was never capable of playing the role in the life of the Jewish communities that its organizers had envisioned. Perhaps that was why they had at the start attempted, unsuccessfully, to draw into their ranks such men as Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff, and Abram Elkus to whom the very idea of a congress was repugnant. In any case, the Congress, like every other voluntary association, was capable of controlling only its own membership and found itself speaking only for those who adhered to its position. At no point was it a body representative of American Jews, or in any sense different in its functioning from other rival agencies.

IT WAS certainly clear, after two decades, that there was as yet no authoritative body to speak for America's Jews. In the 1940's, as another postwar crisis approached, those who still thought such a body essential, still faced the necessity of bringing it into being. Again, as in 1917, the practical pressures of the crisis induced many others to seek some form of cooperation among the organizations dividing Jewish loyalties. But again, the clash between those who believed in voluntary cooperation among autonomous agencies and those who sought unification under majority rule could not be long postponed.

The renewed efforts toward unity stemmed from the conviction of Henry Monsky, president of B'nai B'rith, that some extraordinary "united Jewish front" was essential in the face of the calamitous problems of the Second World War. In 1943 he invited some thirty-five associations to assemble in Pittsburgh to consider the postwar status of the Jews. Thirty-two of the invited groups met and issued a call for an American Jewish Assembly that would devise a concrete program and choose representatives to implement it in cooperation with delegates of Jews from other parts of the world.

The American Jewish Committee refused at first to participate in this project. Its objections, as stated by Judge Proskauer, were simple. "On principle, the American Jewish Committee is unalterably opposed to any plan that would seem to set up the Jews as a separate political enclave"; and the Assembly seemed, in structure and purpose, to do that. As an alternative, the Committee proposed a conference of groups representing various points of view "to find what areas of agreement exist that ought constitute a common ground for united action. Such a conference would not make any claim to speak on behalf of the totality of American Jews; it would not attempt to bind or coerce its own minorities."

In a series of negotiations through the early months of 1943 the Committee's objections were apparently met by far-reaching concessions. The name of the new organization was changed to American Jewish Conference; and on its behalf Mr. Monsky assured the Committee that, "The right of any participating organization to dissent from, and so dissenting not to be bound by, the conclusions of the Assembly, is recognized."

Yet before the first sessions of the Conference were actually held in August, there were unfortunate indications that these assurances were not literally intended by all the participants. Already in June the pages of the *Congress Weekly* revealed that some individuals were harboring more ambitious

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second thoughts on the matter. "Officially the Conference will gather for the limited purpose of agreeing on a program of postwar Jewish demands," the journal acknowledged. But, it went on to say, "Unofficially it is the historic destiny of the Conference to become the promoter of Jewish thoughts and consciousness." Even then the direction of those thoughts was clear. The Conference was to become an "organization in which the collective responsibility of American Israel" would find expression. After all, it was explained, the difference between conference and congress was only technical.

As for the right of dissent guaranteed the Committee, that seemed, in prospect, no obstacle at all. In an article entitled "The Assembly Must Be Sovereign," Charles Sherman made it all clear. "No majority of a sovereign body," he said, "can be induced by threats of withdrawal to submit to the demands of any . . . minorities. The right . . . [of] organizations to withdraw . . . must not be used as a weapon against the majority in spite of the voluntary character of the Assembly. The decisions of the Conference will be accepted by the world at large as the voice of American Jewry."

In the light of these assumptions, it is not surprising that the Conference went down to a speedy and ignominious collapse. On the first consequential test, the majority resorted to the tactics of the political steamroller, and forced through to adoption a resolution repugnant to the minority. Again the victory only exposed the futility of such tactics. Those who won the vote simply forced the minority to withdraw and thereby pulled down the structure of the whole organization. Such, one predicts, will always be the end result of efforts to substitute rule by plebiscites of "the Jewish masses" (generally organized by partisan minorities) in place of voluntary cooperation, operating through a freely arrived at consensus of opinion and mutually agreed upon programs of joint work.

It was against the background of these successive attempts to create an authoritative centralizing agency that the National Community Relations Advisory Council was formed in 1944 to "serve as a coordinating and clearance agency," seeking areas of agreement among organizations which had already clearly demonstrated their unwillingness to be unified. Its membership included the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Labor Committee. It was the assurance that its constituents would risk no aspect of their autonomy that permitted the NCRAC to function successfully for eight years. And it was the threat to that autonomy embodied in the MacIver Report and what followed from it that produced the tragic disruption of the NCRAC this fall. In the perspective of the last forty years, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the proposed reconstitution of the NCRAC was the first step in another of the successive attempts to impose the terms of unity upon American Jews.*

THE recurrence of these efforts, and their consistent failure, indicate that these are not simply the products of the successive crises that were their particular occasion. They would seem to reflect deeper, persisting trends in the development of American communal life.

Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that these are not tendencies particular to the Jews. They seem rather to have asserted themselves in the same years in the experi-

*The recent actions of the National Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (NCJFWF) strongly support this conclusion. This body, the national organization of the central fund-raising and -distributing organizations that exist in almost every American Jewish community of any size, has been very active in getting the NCRAC to implement the proposals of the MacIver Report; in addition, the Large City Budgeting Conference (LCBC), composed of the central fund-raising bodies of the largest cities (with the exception of New York and Chicago), which initiated the discussions leading to the MacIver Report, was set up and is controlled by the NCJFWF. In some respects, many contend, the NCJFWF and the LCBC are already acting as if they were the fiscal arm of a representative congress, using financial sanctions to secure to its majority the right to act for the entire "Jewish community."

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ence of every other organized group in the United States. The parallel with the major religious sectors of American society is impressive. In the very years in which Dr. Magnes worried about Jewish anarchy, other clergymen were troubled by the loose organization of the Protestant denominations and by the absence of any national Catholic organization. In 1908 the advocates of Protestant unity created the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. Between 1910 and 1917, the National Conference of Catholic Charities and the National Catholic Welfare Board were set up, to impose some kind of centralizing authority over the diocesan organization of the church, theretofore largely autonomous and largely self-contained. (It may be added parenthetically that useful as these bodies have been in other ways, they have no more unified Protestants or Catholics than the Congress unified the Jews.) In the past five years, we have again seen a resurgence of movements toward unity among the Protestant denominations.

The problems of unity and authority are not then peculiar to any group, although they take different forms in each. These are problems all Americans have faced in the past half-century. They are aspects of the difficulty of adjusting our pattern of voluntary association to the special conditions of life in modern society. The root of that difficulty is the fact that the voluntary association, by its nature, is not a political entity or a governmental association. It disposes of no powers of compulsion. Yet under the pressure of the hard decades through which we have just lived, individuals and groups have occasionally been tempted to think of these associations as if they were political entities and did have governing powers. Thence the contradictions and the conflicts in practice.

THE drive to endow Jewish associations with quasi-political attributes is no simple one. It is not, for instance, the product of any particular view or philosophy of Jewish life, although it may draw strength from romantic reminiscences at second hand of what the Kehillah both in Central and Eastern Europe once was. Nor does the drive reflect any deep social divisions among American Jews; a survey of the chief protagonists will show it is not possible to draw a line on this question between the "old" or "German" and the "new" or "East European" Jews. Nor, finally, does this drive spring simply from the desire to democratize Jewish life. There are many areas of social action in which the majority does not rule—in the conduct of a business or a university, for instance, or in the operations of a church or a hospital. Majority rule is a technique for securing justice in the acts of a state; and those who call upon it as a slogan applicable to private associations show thereby that, however unconsciously, they have in mind the transfer of political techniques to non-political activities.

The urge toward unity and centralization in Jewish life would seem to be the product of four different forces. That is its strength and its weakness. The variety of these impelling motives accounts for the frequency with which the issue has been raised in the past forty years. The same variety also accounts for the inability of the disparate elements in successive alliances to hold together over any extended period.

A centralizing authority is, first of all, attractive to people who are impatient with the apparent disorder of spontaneous voluntary bodies. It is no coincidence that this movement emerged in the first decade of the century when efficiency was the key to the solution of every social problem. Alike to the businessman who sees the advantages of "management" in his own operations and to the reformer who has no doubt but that disorder can be planned out of human life, social engineering became then, and to some extent has remained, the magic wand to wave away all difficulties. This "Bull Moose" impulse has repeatedly drawn together radicals and men of wealth in the confidence that the right social plan, applied by government if necessary, can eliminate the confused and inefficient operations of voluntary associations.

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There is a sad misunderstanding here of techniques and purposes. President Eliot of Harvard, once advised that a university should be more businesslike, found it necessary to explain that it was not the purpose of a university to earn profits but to spend them. Similarly, it might well be asked whether it is the function of a hospital to be efficient or to cure the bodies of its patients. Is a "defense" organization to be judged by the extent to which it avoids duplication of efforts or by the effectiveness with which it helps create desirable community relations? Regarded from the point of view of ends rather than of means, the spontaneity, flexibility, and versatility of the voluntary associations are an enormous asset, for which there is no place in the calculations of the planners.

Those who object to the inefficiency of organized Jewish life are joined in their objections by a second, quite dissimilar group. Significantly, both Dr. Magnes and Dr. Wise were rabbis who reflected the sentiments of a sector of the American rabbinate that objected to the secular control of Jewish communal life. (Dr. Wise's conception of the "free synagogue" was all too often one in which the rabbi was free to speak and the congregation free only to listen.) Often it seemed laymen, amateurs as it were, had far more power in the determination of events than the rabbi. Perhaps it seemed that some centralized organization would restrain the inclination of any Jewish body to run off at the whim of its own leadership. Certainly the organized rabbinate would be more influential working as a group through such an organization than it was while each rabbi, in his own congregation, was subject to the expressed needs and opinions of his trustees, and in most American Jewish welfare and communal associations and institutions was hardly heeded at all.

More important than the impulses already mentioned was a third, that which sprang from the rising nationalist sentiments of the period. This is not the place to attempt to account for the rise of nationalism among Jews, as among other American ethnic groups, in the years after the First World War. But it was certainly logical for those who thought of "Jewish peoplehood" as a real thing to wish to see that people endowed with political attributes, and in the United States as well as Palestine. Thus it was the Zionists, who anticipated the ultimate emergence of a Jewish state, who for the time being regarded as desirable the creation of a unified community in the United States that would effectively support the state both materially and through influence on the American government. Similarly, many non-Zionist nationalists, thinking along Eastern European lines, regarded as necessary a centralized authority, for it was only thus they thought Jewish survival would be assured.

Most important of all, the last forty years spread a worrisome sense of insecurity through many American ethnic groups. In the face of social changes of unparalleled magnitude, it was difficult to maintain any large semblance of security. As far as the Jews were concerned, the rise of organized anti-Semitism at home and abroad was shocking; the enormous dislocations of place and of status through which many passed in the course of a lifetime were disturbing; and the rapidity with which the social environment changed about them deprived them of the fixed points by which they might judge themselves in their relation to others. Under these circumstances some were fearful. They lost confidence in the capacity of voluntary organizations to deal with the enormous problems before them. They wondered whether Jews really could live an integrated life in the United States with no more protection than these loose spontaneous societies afforded.

Out of this sense of insecurity came the demand for unity; for it was in unity alone, it seemed, that one could find the necessary strength to face the threatening world. Hence the hope that some large authoritative, powerful body might appear to stand between the individual and his potential enemies in other

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groups, a body strong enough to impose discipline within its own ranks and to stand up against the hostile forces outside them.

This is a tragic hope. For such a body, speaking under the enforced discipline of "unity" with "one voice" for all Jews, would not quiet, but would feed the insecurity which brought it into being. Fortunately no such body is likely to appear. The freedom and fluidity of American life appear as capable now, as they have been in the past, of encouraging the spontaneous voluntary association. And most Jews, like most other Americans, still have confidence in the capacity of such associations, not as official agencies, but as representatives only of their own members, to deal with the recurrent problems of a diverse society. Above all, in the United States today, the vast majority of Jews do have confidence that they can settle persisting frictions, misunderstandings, discrimination, and injustices by the mutual approaches of their associations and those of their neighbors. That method has worked magnificently in the past; it has, most feel, unlimited creative possibilities for the future.

THE clamorous argument over the nature of the work by Jews in the community relations field becomes more comprehensible in this context. The apparent inconsistency and the lack of blueprint-clarity in the structure of these agencies are the results of the way in which they developed. They took on functions and contrived the means of executing them under the pressure of the day-to-day necessity of doing a job. They moved into some areas and not into others out of the interest and capability of their members. If the result is confusing from the engineer's point of view, these organizations have nevertheless been remarkably effective. For they possess the flexibility to adapt themselves to the changing requirements of the society in which they operate.

It is therefore not altogether relevant, in examining the various agencies, to ask why particular functions should rest where they do. The experts coming in fresh to the subject would no doubt find it difficult to explain, in theoretical terms, why the American Jewish Committee should support a library, or publish a Year Book, or, for that matter, sponsor COMMENTARY. These activities did not emerge from any theoretical or ideological delineation of tasks. They arose over a long period out of Jewish community needs to which the members of the Committee felt sensitive and which they were anxious to satisfy.

The outcome may, in particular cases, involve some overlapping or duplication of effort. Where that is clearly the case, it is certainly undesirable. But these conditions are not likely to be remedied by the arbitrary theoretical schemes of experts—and even less by the unrealistic community schemes of the ideological revolutionaries. Other attempts to achieve institutional mergers or to discover areas of cooperation or joint work have come only as a result of the patient collaboration of devoted men willing to mark off the boundaries of the areas in which they agree, but willing to recognize those in which they remain free to disagree, and to stay separate and distinct.

This is the only way in which, in America, we can make progress in improving the work of voluntary organizations. For in the end, that authority to govern voluntary organizations which various elements in Jewish life passionately desire to see established is a contradiction in terms. Such authority can only be exercised so long as those under it consider it beneficial to their work and are willing to accept it—just as these voluntary organizations in turn will function only so long as those who came together to found them wish to continue maintaining and supporting them, and working under their aegis to fulfill American Jewish communal ends and aspirations.

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REALITIES BEHIND BRITISH "ANTI-AMERICANISM"

The Minority Leading the National Pastime

T. R. FYVEL

THE time was October 1952, the scene the densely packed conference hall of the British Labor party at Morecambe, in Lancashire. The speaker was no other than the former Minister of Health in the Labor government, and the leader of its rebellious left wing. Ostensibly discussing problems of "unemployment" policy, Aneurin Bevan was driving full steam ahead on one of his impassioned lectures on politics to a rapt audience. Now his Welsh fervor had carried him to the subject of the Americans: how they were ridden by fear; how they were afraid of war—and of peace, too, because it might disrupt their production machine. Then came a pause, as if Bevan realized that he had actually said that the Americans were *continuously* afraid. But before he could go on he was caught up by waves of applause rolling up from the packed delegates on the floor, mostly trade-union branch secretaries and local Labor party organizers.

Nye Bevan, speaking for British Labor, telling the Yanks exactly what British Labor thought of them!

OTHER speakers, who tried to present Anglo-American relations in their proper perspective, talked reasonably and intelligently, particularly the former Chancellor, Hugh Gaitskell, and Denis Healey, one of the most effective younger Labor spokesmen on foreign affairs. Yet one felt that their arguments remained too intellectual to touch the emotions of the audience. No one accuses Bevan and his followers of being Communists, yet an observer might well have judged that, while the Bevanites only *disapproved* of the USSR, they *disliked* the "capitalist United States," in some cases passionately.

Yet to conclude from this that Britain's Labor voters preferred the USSR to the United States, and that the next Labor government might switch its foreign allegiances, would be quite absurd—it would mean mistaking a family squabble for a historic split. After all, to the average British Laborite the USSR is an abstraction. It is American loans, free aid, American films, magazines, and comics that are thrust at him, and American soldiers with plenty of money who walk English streets with local girls—as soldiers are apt to do everywhere. Nor are the Bevanites "pro-Soviet." It would be absurd, for instance, to accuse Bevan's lieutenant, R. H. S. Crossman, the foremost expert on Anglo-American "psychological warfare," and a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, of entertaining the slightest illusions about Communism. Over the last year he has followed a "third force" line sharply critical of some American policies. This may be right or wrong—often wrong, I'd say—but it is not "anti-Americanism." Indeed, a point American reporters often miss is that political at-

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RECENT news reports of attacks on American soldiers on duty in Britain reveal the spread of that strange ailment, "anti-Americanism," from such regions as France and Italy, where it is fanned by a powerful Communist press, to a country which has a minuscule Communist party and is more closely related to us than any other in the world. T. R. FYVEL, a British writer who was for many years literary editor of the London *Tribune*, conducts us here through a tour of the social classes of England in an effort to help us understand this complex and delicate situation, pointing out how anti-Americanism varies in its virulence and character as we proceed from the working class, through the lower-middle and upper-middle class, to the upper class, and finally, that fourth estate—the intellectuals. Mr. Fyvel's last article in COMMENTARY was "Wingate, Orwell, and the Jewish Question," which appeared in our issue for February 1951.

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tacks on American policy and "anti-Americanism" are two quite different things, no more to be confused than, say, criticism of Israeli policy with anti-Semitism. But the phenomenon commonly called "anti-Americanism" most certainly exists; and since it is both complex and highly important at this juncture, it is worth our most careful analysis.

An overseas visitor seeing England for the first time since pre-war days finds most striking the fact that America is all around him. If he tunes in on the BBC's popular "Light Programme" (with two-thirds of Britain's total radio listenership), he will frequently hear American hot jazz or English crooners (alas!) assuming half-American accents. *Call Me Madam* and *South Pacific* succeeded *Oklahoma!* and *Annie Get Your Gun* on the London stage this spring. On London bookstalls the visitor can see *Life* and *Time* prominently displayed in European editions. He may find English friends prizing a subscription to the *New Yorker*. He will also come across a flood of importations from the sub-world of American pulp and comic magazines, sex-and-science fiction, etc., etc. And he may notice how English illustrated magazines increasingly follow American lines, and how English popular newspapers carry regular New York gossip columns such as Don Iddon's chitchat in the *Daily Mail*—and so on.

Traveling through the English countryside, our American visitor finds America still with him. There'll always be a Woolworth's—even in a staid English cathedral town, together with billboard advertisements for Coca-Cola, Palmolive Soap, Colgate's Dental Cream, Gillette Blades, and all the rest of it. In most English towns he will be struck by the size and central location of the movie palaces, more often than not announcing American rather than English films: Abbott and Costello, Gary Cooper, Betty Grable.

Talking to individual Englishmen or Englishwomen, the American will find them as friendly and hospitable as ever. But he will also become aware of a certain antagonism toward himself as an American, particularly if—and here is an important clue—he moves in leftist or highbrow circles. This antagonism is something new and goes beyond the familiar Anglo-American give-and-take, or the rejection of the jukebox aspects of American civilization.

Our visitor will catch a plainly jarring note in joking asides about American wealth and British poverty. He may hear comments about McCarthy, MacArthur, McCarran, and McCormick, about Hollywood values and the American treatment of Negroes, thrust at him as though the whole of American life were summed up in these phenomena. A feeling may grow on him, indeed, that in certain British circles no good word on behalf of the United States is ever permitted. Even in true-blue Tory circles he may hear motives, not of political high-mindedness, but of basest commercial rivalry, attributed to, say, American policy on Hong Kong and its Asian trade. He will feel it most strongly—*nota bene*—when reading the columns of the professionally left-wing and anti-capitalist *New Statesman, Tribune,* or *Reynolds News.*

Some American visitors may go back with the impression that the whole of British opinion is "anti-American." This is absurd; anti-Americanism—whether measured in emotional hostility and prejudice or political opposition—is much less marked in Britain than in France, or Italy, or Germany—especially Germany. For obvious historic reasons, one can find more genuine appreciation of the United States in the British Isles than anywhere else. Many Americans in their impatience fail, however, to realize to what extent British criticism of American foreign policy may spring from sound political reasoning rather than a flaw in British moral character. If British opinion appears forgetful of American postwar aid, many Americans appear unwilling to appreciate the desperately precarious economic position still persisting in Britain today, or to admit that the question still remains unanswered whether American leadership in the defense of the free world can be squared with wild pressure-group politics in Washington.

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Yet, however manifold or various the specific issues under discussion, one basic fact can be seen to be central—*the great transatlantic shift in power*, expressing itself in all the various ways that American influence has been reshaping present-day British life and, in turn, in the various often inconsistent and contradictory British reactions to this.

On so tangled and complex a problem, one can only hope at this point to suggest a few generalizations. First, American influence in Britain is today most noticeable, by and large, among the working class. It is much less marked among the middle classes, and least of all among the still powerful professional upper-middle class. Moreover, while the average working man, or for that matter the average businessman, may voice a dislike of American ways, there is usually a good deal of admiration mixed in, and he is unlikely to demonstrate that often bitter antagonism towards all things American to be found in British *intellectual* circles.

The most powerful American influence on British working-class life has been through the film. In the great wastes of Britain's industrial towns, the cinema today plays a more important role in daily life than anywhere else in Europe. There was a vacuum to be filled. Two centuries of Puritanism and harsh industrial revolution had almost destroyed the spirit of Merry England. Indeed, on a gray, rainy evening in an English manufacturing town where else can a young worker and his girl find refuge and relaxation but in the warm alluring darkness of the local cinema? And going to the cinema has in most cases meant watching American films, looking at pictures of love-making, success, gangsterism, war, or the Wild West, as conceived and produced in Hollywood.

The British film industry is the largest outside the United States and has over the last decade made notable progress. Nonetheless, British film producers still experience difficulty in filling their official quota of about 25 per cent of showing-time in British cinemas. This is generally put down to a lack of finances with which to compete with Hollywood's immense resources, which sooner or later seem to attract most British stars. But more than that appears to be involved. British exhibitors and cinema owners have repeatedly shown themselves unwilling to show even the official minimum quota of British films. Perhaps it is because British film writers and directors all went to the wrong schools, or because of the intricacy of British class distinctions, but the fact is that the most successful British films have a middle-class appeal. On the other hand, American film producers—like other American industrialists—appear to have discovered the secret of standardized mass manufacture for a classless market. And the British working classes, who form the majority of cinema-goers, have shown beyond doubt that they *like* the stupendous or stereotyped productions of Hollywood as much as—or more than—the more sophisticated British films that have lately attracted the fancy of a cultivated minority in America.

I believe that when the Labor government, some three years back, was contemplating a severe cut in American film imports in order to save dollars, it was warned that if fewer films were offered in the main industrial areas, the result might well be a fall in productivity. In short, American films have become an essential feature of life in England's factory towns, and especially with the younger generation.

Next to films, American popular music has had the greatest impact. If England until a generation ago was *das Land ohne Musik*, this was true above all of the English working class, whose lives were music-less apart from half-remembered snatches of music hall ditties or half a dozen Edwardian tunes like "Daisy, Daisy." Here the Americans can truly say, "We have changed all that." The tunes the British soldiers sang during the 1914-18 war were still written in London, but during the recent one, the BBC saw to it that Tin Pan Alley and Dixieland and Americanized crooners' accents accompanied Britain's far-flung forces wherever they marched. Expert knowledge of swing or

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hot jazz is today probably as widespread in the suburbs of London, the Midlands, or the industrial North, as in many parts of the United States. In their Anglicized forms, such institutions as the "rhythm club" or the "semi-professional" dance band exist up and down the country. The old English pastime of square dancing has returned in its hillbilly version to sweep the field, while Lancashire mill girls whose mothers still wore clogs today go jitterbugging.

Though American dance music is played in the London West End hotels, this active interest in jazz remains very much a class phenomenon concentrated in the lower-income brackets. And this is socially significant. During the war, at a time when I was commuting between a British and an American army headquarters, I remember being struck by the fact that in both the American enlisted men's and the officers' messes the radio was going all the time; and so it was in the British "other ranks" ("G.I.") mess. In the somewhat exclusive British officers' mess I visited, this would have been unthinkable. But one should not forget that these officers represented only a small upper-class minority.

To talk of another small minority: on the lowest social level, American influence through gangster films and cheap magazines has produced a new "Americanized" British lower world—those strangely overpainted young girls who used to hang around United States army camps, and the "flash boys" equipped with imitation-American clothes and slang, who in several larger cities have turned a few streets into drab imitations of 42nd Street. It is these rather repellent young people who are apt to catch the eye of melancholy Roman Catholic novelists brooding over Britain's decline, and who have been cited as examples of American corruption. But I don't think this new British subclass is either very numerous or significant, or that its members would have been any better off without American influence.

The main fact, and the important one, is that the new cultural imports from the United States have helped to bring more variety and color to British working-class life: drama, in the shape of Hollywood films, and music, in the guise of jazz, where there was neither drama nor music before. Is this standardized American drama and music on a lower level than one might wish, and to a certain extent taste-corrupting? It is possible to say "Yes." Yet it remains true that American mass entertainment was able to make its first headway only because British society, shaped and dominated by the ruling classes, did not, apart from sport, include anything in the way of organized leisure-time entertainment for the masses; the British upper class of a generation ago had not, indeed, given much thought to the matter.

AMERICAN influences have, in addition, had a perceptible effect on the whole style of life of the British working class, as well as its entertainment. The women have probably been more affected than the men. The average British worker, whatever his vote, is one of the most conservative beings in the world, essentially still content with his own stylized culture of beer and companionship at the local pub, of horse-racing, dog-racing, and football, betting, trade unionism, labor politics, and innumerable hobbies. Though he probably likes American films and music, it is just as probable that he remains, politically, somewhat anti-Yank. America, to him, stands for capitalism. He has heard about high American wages, about American workers riding in big cars, but all this is far away, across the Atlantic, and he is still not convinced that it has any bearing on his own problem.

The outlook of his wife, however, may already be very different. Some thirty years ago British working-class housewives were mostly still confined to a proletarian or semi-slum existence; their lives were narrow; they seemed to change early in life into child-bearing drudges of the type whose slatternly dress and eccentric grammar provided such a traditional source of fun for the cartoonists of *Punch*. By comparison, the young British working-class woman of today is almost bourgeois.

One must not exaggerate: three decades of

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social progress, the labor movement, and the welfare state have been mainly responsible, not America. But American influences, especially the picture of American life as portrayed on the screen, have certainly helped speed and channelize this process. They have helped to teach the British wage-earner's wife and daughter that working-class life today need be neither proletarian nor humble. They have helped to popularize notions of cleaner living and eating, of modern kitchen units, of labor-saving household devices. Visiting the home of a young British working-class couple, particularly in a new housing development area, one is often struck by the Americanized look of their home as reflected in the presence of a radio-phonograph, a television set, a refrigerator, of American-style illustrated women's magazines often carrying Hollywood columns, and in the tendency towards large sofa cushions and tasseled standard lamps rather than imitations of severe British upper-class furniture.

On the whole, I think, these particular American influences have been very much to the good. The young British housewife's admiration for the brighter, cleaner, more classless American way of domestic life may often be unconscious, but it is usually plain enough.

Bernard Shaw once divided all social classes into "upstart" and "downstart." Roughly, one can say that it is the socially upstart classes in Britain that have taken most readily to an Americanized way of life. The British working class, for example, is today very much an upstart class. So, on the whole, is the prosperous business and manufacturing class of the North of England, with its great steel, engineering, and shipbuilding industries. Life in such circles, revolving round business, money, golf, whiskey, automobiles, Rotarianism, and the rest, does not really differ so much from its American counterpart. You can hear plenty of criticism of the United States in British business circles, but it usually lacks venom or the neurotic touch. After all, in spite of six years under a Labor government, the British business community has done well enough for itself.

But not everyone can imitate America. For the main stream of anti-American sentiment in Britain, the social researcher will have to go elsewhere, to the "downstart" classes.

There is, first of all, the upper class. Ever since 1914, it has been steadily declining in power and money. One by one, the stately homes have been closed. The former conspicuous consumption has dwindled to a fraction of what it was. On the whole, however, the British upper class has so far retained enough of its famous poise and self-confidence to avoid any mood of defeatist anti-Americanism. After all, whatever might be felt about the American way of life, the Anglo-American alignment remains a main political theme of upper-class Toryism, and its dominant attitude towards America has remained one of optimistic concentration on relations with the "right kind of people" across the Atlantic. There are the links with the American rich, with the world of the social pages of the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune;* Oxford and Cambridge have ties with Harvard, Yale, and Princeton; there are also the ties of frequent intermarriage. In short, if the task of balancing British aristocratic tradition and culture against American wealth has become more difficult, it has not yet become impossible.

But on another level, however, this task *is* becoming too difficult—namely, on the level of England's professional, administrative, and imperial upper-middle class. For more than a century this class had set its stamp on Britain, India, the Near East, China, and many other places—and, at least culturally and intellectually, on the United States. But today it is very much a "downstart" class at home. Opportunities have shrunk with the Empire. Even senior government servants, army officers, and distinguished professional men are no longer permitted by present price and income-tax levels to lead anything like the cultured, leisurely, and comfortable, if restrained, lives to which they were accus-

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tomed. Evidences of the decline of this class are visible everywhere in London. The tall terrace houses of Kensington and Bayswater, the strongholds of London's solid upper-middle class, are today decayed, or subdivided in flatlets, or converted to business premises; the formerly exclusive department stores in these areas now cater to a popular market.

It is among this downstart upper-middle class that I think anti-American feeling runs strongly. It is here one so often hears remarks —about American political clumsiness, MacArthur or Dulles, China and Japan, the latest Washington scandal, or the antics of the latest Hollywood film star visiting London—expressed with a sarcastic sharpness, an unpleasant undertone that betray an underlying resentment.

Such feeling is understandable; it is the old, old feeling of the new poor towards the new rich. Yet anti-American feeling is probably even more pronounced two or three further steps down the social ladder, among what George Orwell called the "lower upper-middle class." This is a peculiarly English class, comprising lesser government servants, under-managers, schoolmasters, and white-collar workers in general. All these are people who have for a long time ranked no higher in income than many industrial workers, but have tried to take their ideals from above and lead the life of public school gentlemen, or at least a parody of it. For the sufferings involved in this pathetic snobbery, see the novels of Graham Greene, or George Orwell's early work, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. Even before the war, English shabby gentility was paying diminishing returns.

Today most members of this "lower upper-middle class" have been forced down almost to the proletarian level, with resultant bitterness. Bitterness against the Labor government whose welfare-state leveling has knocked away the props of snobbery—and bitterness against America, too. Not only because she represents untold wealth, but also because American influence, as exerted through films, music, or magazines, is relatively classless and unconcerned with English snobberies. Thus it is among the downstart inhabitants of the shabby-genteel boarding houses of London that one may well hear the most vitriolic remarks about American wealth, American vulgarity, and American influence in general.

THE most vitriolic remarks—except, that is, for certain circles of English intellectuals, especially on the political left. There is no doubt about the strength of anti-American feeling there—one can sense it clearly in the pages of the *New Statesman*, or in the embittered anti-American writings of a man like G. D. H. Cole. And this intellectual anti-Americanism is too all-pervasive to be explained by any merely political equation of left versus right, or British socialism versus American capitalism. The causes, I think, are much more complex. Here, too, some of them lie in social and economic changes. As a class, British intellectuals have during recent years found themselves increasingly downstart. University lecturers, even at Oxford and Cambridge, have found their incomes less and less adequate even to the bare minimum of decent middle-class life. British writers, no longer able to live on their literary earnings, have been forced into the so-called "half-intellectual" — and sometimes soul-destroying—occupations of advertising, public relations, and the like. British scientists and research workers, too, seem for some reason badly underpaid.

All this cannot be blamed directly on the Americans. Yet the crux of the matter is this: since the war, British intellectuals have seen themselves as an increasingly impoverished and downstart class, while across the Atlantic, American wealth and power have been attaining new levels. And the resentment of British intellectuals appears to have seized upon this. Sometimes the resentment may be focused on genuine grievances. For example, the feverish development of American mass-product advertising seems to bear a direct relation to the newsprint famine outside the United States that has closed down scores of British publications. Sometimes the grievances are less specific. All in

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all, many British intellectuals feel genuinely despondent about their future, and the future of their function, and role, in an increasingly Americanized world.

To this, one must add a sharp sense of cultural conflict. The fashionable British intellectual outlook of today is strikingly pessimistic and backward-looking. One can see this expressed in the remarkable revival of literary interest in the Victorians, in the cult of Henry James, in the obeisance before such avowed protagonists of aristocratic culture as Sir Osbert Sitwell or T. S. Eliot. And it is not difficult to see the attractions of this attitude. A British intellectual who before the war was educated at an expensive public school, but now cannot make ends meet on his literary earnings, and perhaps cannot find a creative urge as he sits in what George Orwell called America's "Airstrip One," finds immense comfort in thinking that at least he belongs to a chosen minority who are the only guardians of genuine—that is, exclusive and upper-class—culture.

The *New Statesman,* for example, stands in its political columns often to the left of the Labor party, but it is significant that the literary and cultural values of the second half of that magazine are, without hesitation, those of the upper-class chosen few. And it is these cultural values of the elite, and their ability to cling to them, which British intellectuals feel to be menaced by the tide of Americanization.

The America they see in this connection is not only that of Sam Goldwyn, the national magazines, technicolor ads, ghost writing, and the nihilism behind *Collier's* notorious number on the "coming" atomic war. The conflict goes deeper. What many British intellectuals oppose, dislike, and fear in America is something one might call the capitalist version of classless culture, which has, we have noted, found a large responsiveness among British workers and perhaps already affected their tastes. But this culture leaves no room for the intellectual class's cultural privileges. It is here that the shoe pinches, and it is here that we find the British intellectual standing shoulder to shoulder in a united front of British upper-class culture against the American threat. British intellectuals, of whatever stripe, whether socialists or right-wing Catholics, Richard Crossman or Evelyn Waugh, T. S. Eliot or Bertrand Russell, are strangely but fundamentally aligned, as though they had discovered that beyond all political and religious differences they had after all gone to the same schools—which, of course, they did. Indeed, I have felt about many British left-wing intellectuals that, because they must repress their dislike of the British version of the Age of the Common Man, they give vent to it with all the more vehemence against the American version.

Even this sketchy survey, however, may be enough to show how complex a phenomenon is covered by the phrase "anti-American sentiment in Britain." You may have a British workman, a good left-wing trade unionist, enjoying American movies week after week, vaguely aware of American high wages, but politically taking the Bevanite view of America as a rapacious capitalist country. You may have a wealthy British visitor to the United States telling eager American listeners that Britain has been irretrievably ruined by socialism; and conversely, an angry British industrialist writing a letter to the *Times* to the effect that the United States tariff policy is deliberately designed to ruin British trade. You can have a crusty member of the British upper-middle class, say a retired officer or school principal, urging that Britain follow Sweden's example in banning American comics, or impoverished members of the lower upper-middle class explicitly blaming the United States for their downstart plight (it is interesting that the few fragmentary remnants of British fascism, which largely appeal to this last class, all take a violent anti-American line). Lastly, you can find a British intellectual ready to praise an individual American book, poem, or piece of scholarship, but nonetheless giving the cultural conflict of our time a "Britain versus America" twist. What

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emerges is that the forms of anti-American sentiment in England shift and change in Protean succession.

WHAT therefore—and this is the question which must interest Americans—should be done about it? Especially since anti-Americanism in Britain is both less widespread and less violent than in countries like France, Italy, or Germany, which have known military defeat and occupation, or in underdeveloped countries like India, where it is fed by the deep-rooted Asian sense of inferiority. Some see the problem in practical terms and urge more American missions and invitations, more lectures, exchange of intellectuals, more joint councils on productivity, etc. Such activities no doubt have a limited usefulness. But it is hard to feel that many Americans as yet understand how far their relations with other countries have become essentially—may I be so bold as to use the word—imperialist.

The word "imperialist" is one, of course, that most Americans would indignantly reject. And it is true that the new American imperialism (like Soviet imperialism in its own certainly less sweet way, for that matter) has not followed the classical West European pattern of conquest, occupation, and rule through mixed European and native colonial administrations. It is also true that most Americans never wished for their present imperial responsibilities. But this is beside the point—the British Empire, too, was largely created in a fit of absent-mindedness. When one looks at the network of American military bases stretching from Seoul to Suffolk, at the whole system of American military and economic aid, of military, financial, and technical missions, and of economic and cultural exports from Coca-Cola to comics, it is clear that something like an "American imperial sphere" has indeed sprung up—or an "American sphere of responsibility," if one dislikes the word "imperial" and shuns the concept of Empire.

Many Americans, to be sure, still imagine fondly that this international responsibility can be shed tomorrow or the day after. But it is most unlikely. And if one accepts this fact, one must accept its consequences, one of which is that, as the new imperial overlords, the Americans have inherited much of the unpopularity of the British in their great imperial period. (Which, incidentally, was also the period when they were rendering the world a distinct service by maintaining the *Pax Britannica*. For a parallel to the international dislike of General MacArthur one need go back only half a century, to the Boer War and the violent anti-British feeling it aroused in its day.) The problem of coping with such unpopularity is not easy. But if the problem is to be tackled, the power realities of leadership and dependency behind it must be clearly understood; then we may be able to decide whether it is possible to mitigate in some way the emotional consequences of Britain's loss of power.

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THE ARABS, ISRAEL, AND NEAR EAST DEFENSE

Our Government's Still Unsettled Policy

HAL LEHRMAN

WASHINGTON

HERE in Washington—and in the temples of United Nations brotherhood on New York's East Forty-second Street—it has become a diplomatic maxim that, like oil and water, the Arabs and Israelis do not and cannot mix. This writer has uncovered, after admittedly dogged search, knowledgeable observers who believe that Frenchmen and Tunisians may yet lie down together, or Italians with Yugoslavs, or Pakistanis with Hindustanis—or even Soviet Russians with Americans, each armed to the teeth but willing to leave bad enough alone, short-term or, maybe, long-term. But Israel and the Arab states—never!

However hopeful their statements for the record, American policy-makers will privately confess they do not quite know what to try next. And the same sense of helplessness has filtered through to the press and to well-informed and concerned public opinion, including that of American Jewry.

Symptomatic of this stalemate is Washington's inability thus far to make even a start on fulfillment of its plans to give the Middle East free and substantial military aid. Such intentions were clearly underscored in both the 1951 and 1952 Mutual Security Acts, when Congress earmarked $396,000,000 and $499,000,000 for direct military help to Greece, Turkey, Iran *and* the Middle East. The President was authorized to allocate up to 10 per cent of these sums to Israel and the Arab countries. Israel applied formally for arms and equipment within a few months after passage of the first act. Numerous inquiries followed, and as recently as this September, Ambassador Abba Eban reminded Secretary of State Acheson of Israel's continued interest. But to date not a dollar has been released to either side—although the funds are available and Soviet threats, Western defense needs, and Middle East ferment make them more urgently needed than ever before.

It was only this past July that the United States finally authorized *sale* to Israel of so-called "reimbursable" military equipment from surplus stocks. But purchase is stringently limited by Israel's poverty. Meanwhile the large pool of "non-reimbursable" arms remains untapped. The Arabs have been notified, in effect, that they must first join some kind of Western-proposed regional defense organization. One major reason, among others, for Arab reluctance to do so is that Israel would be in it too. Israel, for her part, is willing to join. But the United States, as is clear, has stood immobilized by its fear of Arab wrath if equipment were given to the Arabs' "enemy" alone. The net result has been absolute frustration.

Maxims about human behavior, however, should be no less subject to constant reinspection than axioms in science. The Arab-Israel problem is hardly a unique—or the worst—example of accumulated bitterness between peoples in recent times. Surely Arab-Israeli antagonism, even if as deep as generally described, cannot be compared with the "natural" antagonism between Frenchmen and Germans. Yet, in great measure owing to American diplomacy, Bonn and Paris today

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THE Near East, it is generally agreed, is today perhaps the most serious gap in the system of defenses the democratic world is trying to build up against Russia. One of the leading military powers of that region, a strong defender of the democratic cause, is viewed with the greatest hostility by all its neighbors—and the unenviable task of Western diplomacy is to weld that power, Israel, and its neighbors who have suffered military defeat at its hands into a strong force capable of holding the important mineral resources and strategic positions of the Near East for the West. HAL LEHRMAN here reviews the tangled history of recent efforts to set up a Near Eastern defense organization, the issues now dividing Israel and the Arab states, and the Western hopes of resolving them. The exclusive disclosures and predictions contained in Mr. Lehrman's most recent article in COMMENTARY, "Washington Comes to Israel's Economic Rescue," in our October issue, have since been confirmed by government action in Israel.

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are making stupendous mutual accommodations. Greece and Turkey, historic enemies, now nestle together in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Yugoslavia, which scarcely five years past was the base from which Red guerrillas raided "imperialist" Greece, is now contemplating an alliance with that country. If these and other miracles of conciliation have come to pass, is it not unduly pessimistic to consider the Middle East as hopeless of redemption? But where find the formula? Perhaps the search might best begin by ascertaining what differences exist between Washington and Tel Aviv on how to deal with the Arabs.

THE overriding American objective in the Middle East has been—and most probably will continue to be under the Eisenhower administration—to "contain" that region against Communist expansion and Soviet aggression. A full program to achieve this would require: (1) economic and social reforms to alleviate the discontent of the masses; (2) political reforms to reduce government inefficiency and administrative corruption; and (3) the founding and encouragement of stable regimes, the tranquillizing of relations between the Arab states and the West, and between them and Israel. But the most crucial short-range need is military—the creation of some sort of apparatus that could stimulate the region's defenses and, in the event of war, be the nucleus of Allied command operations.

Last November Britain, the United States, France, and Turkey invited Egypt to accept equal partnership in a proposed Middle East Command (MEC) that envisaged the garrisoning of Allied troops in the area, which would also receive a full-fledged international headquarters. The project was largely British-inspired. It tried to kill two birds with one stone: to set up a real defense organization, and at the same time save face for both sides in the Anglo-Egyptian dispute over British evacuation of the Suez Canal. As often happens with such a stone, both birds escaped.

The proposal came at the height of the tension between London and Cairo. The ultra-nationalist Egyptian government then in power denounced and rejected it out of hand as a transparent trick to preserve British rule in Egypt. The other Arab states, to whom membership in MEC had not been formally offered pending enlistment of Egypt's support, were consequently absolved from making a decision—and were loath to affront Egypt by showing any enthusiasm. So MEC was tentatively shelved as "premature."

A British plan is now under study by the powers most concerned with eventual Middle Eastern defense: the United States, France, Turkey, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. This plan contemplates avoiding the pitfalls of MEC by changing the name of the proposed organization to MEDO (Middle East Defense Organization), which removes the obnoxious term "command," and by limiting MEDO's immediate scope to planning and consultation. This is considerably less ambitious than the MEC idea of armies, headquarters, and bases, but it might logically lead back to an MEC setup anyway, since installation of troops and equipment could be a normal outgrowth from planning.

At this moment, hope exists that Cairo, under the new regime of Major General Mohammed Naguib, may actually come to terms with Britain. Conversations between Naguib and the British Embassy are singularly cordial; a Sudan settlement looks more promising than at any time since Kitchener; London has voluntarily turned custody of a key Suez Canal bridge over to the Egyptian army and shown willingness to release a large slice of Egypt's frozen sterling balances. Naguib, a professional soldier interested in strengthening his army and himself, has exhibited a frank desire for military aid from the West. If he can consolidate his position enough to control the fanatical anti-British elements that are now among his main props, Egypt may yet march into a Middle East Command as originally devised—with the other Arab states parading behind her.

BUT this is still just a diplomatic dream. It is more practical at this juncture to ask what Western intentions would be if MEDO should be rejected too.

In all likelihood an Allied defense organ would be established *without* the Arabs. "Come what may," a British spokesman told me, "we are determined to have an organization—because the Middle East must be defended."

At the outset a difference over method existed between London and Washington. When the MEDO project was first circulated, the Foreign Office and the State Depart-

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ment agreed on the desirability of Arab adherence. But Whitehall tended to favor making the structure first, and then throwing it open to Arab membership, while the Department recommended winning over the Arabs before commencing to build. This difference reflected Britain's disillusionment after a long history of failure in Arab conciliation, and the United States' optimism as a relative novice in Arab relations.

Since then both governments have come closer: the British have taken heart from the ebbing of the Nile jitters, and in America the Pentagon, once hesitant about becoming heavily involved in the Middle East, has grown more aware of the need for large commitments to insure the area's defense. Today the two powers are virtually agreed that something will have to be done, with or despite the Arabs.

It is noteworthy, however, that nobody seems to know precisely what the "something" is to be if Egypt and her sister states should balk. As one high American official puts it, "We'd rather not start worrying about it until we're forced to." In fact, nobody seems to know even what mechanisms MEDO itself should create to regulate the relations of the Arab states with Israel, and of both groups with the international military superstructure, in the happy event that the Arabs do come in.

An important contemplated function of MEDO is to foster a regional rather than national outlook among the younger officer cadres of all the local armies. (The fraternization of Arab and Israeli junior personnel now in British and American service schools is an encouraging sign of the larger possibilities for long-range regional understanding under a common MEDO tent.) But one searches in vain for a clear blueprint of Arab-Israeli collaboration on the staff and planning level.

It is realized that defense schemes involving the participation of local member states must assume that the local frontiers will be open. How can Egyptian matériel move into Jordan without crossing Israeli territory, or the Israeli army be of any use to Turkey without free transit across Syria and the Lebanon? But it is also realized that top-echelon Arab officers and their governments, in their present frame of mind, are not likely to exchange military secrets or even sit down at the same confidential table with representatives of a Jewish state that they regard as a greater and nearer enemy than the remote Soviet Union.

The best thought thus far is that the Arab and Israeli groups inside a MEDO, or MEC, might somehow be insulated from each other on the horizontal plane while simultaneously having direct, vertical, and parallel liaison straight up to the central international staff. The complexities and inadequacies of such a scheme are too obvious for comment. Meanwhile, pending an invitation to the Arabs, and its acceptance, there is no international staff of any kind. Nothing in the way of solid military reinforcement for the region is being done anywhere at all.

IN THIS situation little Israel is formally displaying a correct and dignified patience, letting it be known that she is ready to cooperate when, as, and if her cooperation is invited. Informally, however, she argues that Middle Eastern defense preparations must go forward whether the Arabs wish it or not, and that she for one is ready to begin.

On the record Israel is able to exhibit a statesmanlike detachment because she has been assured by London and Washington that no Middle East defense system, of whatever design, will be made without her or used against her.

So long as the Arab states persist in their open hostility, Israel feels she must oppose any move to strengthen her antagonists which does not equally strengthen herself. In recent notes to the United States, Britain, and France—signatories of the 1950 Tripartite declaration threatening joint action to prevent Israel-Arab frontier violations—she has objected in advance to any unilateral arming of the Arabs. Israel would prefer that Western aid to the area, herself included, emphasize militarily useful construction and developmental projects rather than actual weapons. But if Syria and the others are to have jet planes, tanks, and heavy guns, Israel insists she must have them too.

She is alert to Arab League maneuvers for acceptance of its so-called "collective security pact"—unabashedly and exclusively aimed at Israel—as the basis for the Middle East's military collaboration with the West. She is aware that the rising new breed of "little Ataturks"—Naguib in Egypt, Colonel Adib

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Shishekly in Syria—has the support of frenzied nationalists whose sharpest knives are saved for Israel. Potential MEDO or MEC to the contrary notwithstanding, she has heard the bellicose rumblings on all her frontiers and recently extended the term of compulsory universal military service from two years to thirty months.

Unlike the Arabs, however, Israel no longer feels "neutral" or "non-identified" with either side in the cold war. She *knows* that the Soviet colossus is a far greater threat to her survival as a free society than any combination of her hostile neighbors. She is therefore prepared to accept Western pledges that a Western-sponsored defense system will give her the proper place and guarantees.

The extent of her confidence was reflected in her imperturbable reply last November to an ominous Soviet warning against joining MEC—a warning which a year or two earlier would have been a bombshell in Tel Aviv. There still is a voluble minority in the parliament and the country that calls any gesture toward Washington a "surrender to imperialism," but, as Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett retorted in the Knesset to objections against purchase of American arms: "If Israel needs these arms and if, in order to acquire them, it will be necessary to enter certain commitments, she will enter these commitments." During his visit to the United States this summer, the Foreign Minister made Israel's availability for a regional defense structure very plain: "We are deeply anxious to defend our own democracy and, being keenly aware of the worldwide indivisibility of the struggle for democracy's future, to play our part in its universal defense. . . ."

Israel's willingness to work even with the Arabs for regional security was underscored sweepingly when an American correspondent the other day asked Prime Minister David Ben Gurion his attitude toward a Middle East Command. Noting that "we were not approached . . . and were therefore not requested to give an answer," the Prime Minister forcefully added: "Israel is prepared to defend her sovereignty and democratic freedom with all the means at her disposal and . . . to *cooperate with all* who have this aim at heart."

Such, to repeat, is Israel's formal position. Privately, however, her spokesmen give the impression that they are very dubious about the methods being used to coax Arab cooperation—and are convinced that precious time is being lost while the Western powers, especially the United States, continue to wait in vain for the Arabs to come in.

Present American policy—say the Israelis—ignores British experience in the Middle East, as well as the Americans' own experience in Europe. Britain has learned not to rely on Moslem friendship, or on appeasement as a tool of diplomacy. Even to Naguib in Egypt, the British are making limited concessions but no surrenders. In Iran the strongest British argument against American pressure to placate Mossadegh is that such softness would inevitably provoke an epidemic of oil-property confiscations (including American holdings) everywhere else in the Middle East. As for MEC-MEDO, the British maintain rightly—say the Israelis—that wooing the Arabs will only make them harder bargainers.

American desire to see a defense system spring full-grown from Middle Eastern soil, the Israelis contend, entirely reverses the methods used by the Americans themselves to produce a defense system in Western Europe. It took four years or more to build NATO—cautiously, step by step, preparing each country separately and thoroughly (with prior emphasis on economic and regional cooperation) before even suggesting that they join together under a common military roof. In the Middle East—where there is considerably less regional awareness, political sophistication, or understanding of the Soviet threat—the United States seems intent, however, on building from the roof down. But a military alliance cannot possibly be cemented so long as some of its prospective members are suspicious of others, to say nothing of being positively hostile to one member. Even if it takes a very long time, pacification of the *entire* Middle East is an essential preliminary to any viable Middle Eastern defense system. This means a settlement, not only between Britain and Egypt, but above all between Israel and the Arabs.

Moreover, the Israelis are convinced, no regional security structure can emerge before its component parts have recognized the identity and nature of the real threat to regional security. If for no other reason, then, the structure should wait until the

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Arabs have been made to see their advantage in belonging to it. In their present frame of mind why should they take sides against Russia? The Arabs are traditionally and congenitally neutralist. Even when Rommel's tanks rattled outside Alexandria in World War II, not a single shot was fired by Egyptians in support of their British defenders. The Syrians collaborated with Vichy, the Iraqis with the Germans. The fact is that the Arabs always prefer to wait—and pick the winner. Their philosophy, as the Israelis read it, runs as follows: If you are weak, you do not deserve our support; if you are strong, you don't need it; therefore let us be prudent until the last moment, when we shall see who is weak and who is strong.

WHAT then, according to the Israeli point of view, should the Americans do to strengthen the Middle East militarily? They should abandon their present attempts to create a *complete* regional apparatus all at once and start building from the bottom up with any country willing to cooperate—as they have already done with marked success in Turkey's case. The Middle East is too vital an oil depot, supply base, and station for Allied fleets; it is too obviously the Soviet back door to Europe, and too valuable as a Western aerial assault point against the Soviet to be left totally unsecured. In economic policy the United States has already recognized her own interest in making Israel strong.* Let Washington's military policy, too, now recognize the logical implications of this interest and place Israel—and any other country if and when willing—in a position to make the maximum military contribution should the need arise. And, concurrently, let Washington strive, not by entreaty but by legitimate firmness, to effect that Arab rapprochement with Israel without which no truly regional security plan can be written. Moreover, and above all, say Israelis, let the United States proceed in the Middle East—as she has done elsewhere—to lay the basis for defense by helping economic consolidation and democratic progress.

By military aid, Israelis are thinking not just of arms but also of equipment that would enable their strategically located territory to make the same valuable contribution, only larger, that Palestine gave the Allies in World War II as a repair shop, supply source, arsenal, granary, and deployment center.

If Haifa were to receive floating docks where battle-bruised Allied warships could be mended, instead of having to send them to Portsmouth or New York, or if Israel had a second deep-water port on the Mediterranean for reception of Allied shipping and shipments, how could this threaten Cairo or Baghdad? And if Suez were cut by Soviet bombing, and the rudimentary Israeli port of Eylat on the Red Sea happened by that time to be ready for use as an alternative link between the Mediterranean and the East (to supply and provision, among others, the Arab peoples), would that be an aggressive act against Beirut and Amman?

The Israelis argue that many other projects can be of mutual value to Israel, the Middle East, and world democracy in wartime without disadvantaging the Arabs. (They would assuredly be disadvantageous to the Arabs if the war were an Arab-Israeli war, but the Israeli assumption is that such a conflict could start only by Arab aggression.) Among such projects are:

—enlargement of British Mandate-built military airstrips in Israel to take heavier, faster planes (which the Israeli air force does not possess);

—improvement of highway, railroad, air, telephone, and other communications to facilitate transit of troops, matériel, and information across Israel, which borders on four Arab states and sits astride most of the shortest routes between them;

—expansion and readying of Israeli industry for quick conversion to military production (light arms and artillery, tanks, shells, uniforms, etc.) when needed;

—stockpiling of wheat, fuel, transport equipment, and other essential supplies to service Allied troops and the local populations in the event of wartime blockade.

THESE proposals and similar ones, so far as this reporter knows, have not been officially spelled out or even formally broached by the Israelis to the American authorities. But they have been more than hinted at in informal conversations between the two governments. This in itself shows a tremendous change in the Israeli attitude.

*See "Washington Comes to Israel's Economic Rescue," by this writer, in COMMENTARY, October 1952.

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Scarcely a year ago, while making the rounds of the Foreign Office in Tel Aviv, I evoked expressions of horror when I suggested the possible airing in print of a few ideas about mutually useful Western development of Israel's wartime potential. Yet a recent "background" release by the Israeli Office of Information in this country, while perhaps overenthusiastic about its dimensions, implies a clear invitation to come and improve that potential.

This bolder approach indicates three changes from Israel's previous position: first, she is no longer even pretending to mask her sympathies in the current world situation; second, the Israeli government considers "neutralist" and fellow-traveling opposition at home less and less worth placating; third, Israelis are growing increasingly unhappy over American caution in dealing with the Arabs, and over the resultant stalemate in regional preparedness.

Some Israelis even contend that a frank, uninhibited, and large-scale program of military aid for Israel would be the surest way to prod the Arabs out of their present inertia. According to this view, the Arabs might be galvanized into clamorous enthusiasm for MEDO, or even larger commitments to the West, if confronted with proof positive in the Israeli case of the fruits to be plucked from loyal collaboration with the democratic cause.

Now it may yet come to pass, and perhaps soon, as already suggested, that the United States will feel impelled to stop waiting for the Arabs and go ahead on Middle East defense without them. But there is no evidence yet of American recognition of the possibility that the Arabs might be won over by building up Israel as a military base. There is, on the contrary, more than a suspicion that such a policy would mean disaster. Although Israel beat the Arab alliance in a fair fight, Washington reasons, there still are some thirty to forty million Arabs in the Middle East in addition to the one and one-half million Israelis. These Arab millions, as the saying goes, also have "a lot more real estate."

Washington does not delude itself into believing that Arab armies, even armed and trained to the teeth, would be of much help when needed. But Arab territory is so large that merely to use it as an Allied base would create a vast policing and native labor problem unless the local populations remained at least quiescent, and willing to work on Allied installations. The importance of this was learned in World War II, especially by the British, who experienced the difference between Egypt, where they were unmolested, and Burma, where the population was hostile. In the opinion of American policymakers, the surest way to provoke the Arab masses and their leaders would be to make special military concessions to Israel.

The Arab world, the United States believes, is more embittered against "colonialism" than Communism. Admittedly, the great error in the MEC proposal was that it asked for commitment to a military apparatus designed by the suspect "colonial" powers and presented to the Arabs as a *fait accompli*. The Egyptians in particular saw in it a scheme to replace British troops with other "imperialist" troops, as bad as or possibly worse than the British. Other Arab countries also viewed MEC as a potential and needless provocation of the USSR, from whom they think they have little to fear.

MEDO should seem more attractive because it says nothing about troops and other physical intrusions into Arab territory, does not scare the Arabs by imposing a finished edifice upon them, and gives them the status of equal partnership in *advance* of planning and consultation. One of the limited but important advantages of MEDO would be that it could bring the Arab military chiefs into constant and intimate contact with Western leaders, providing a round table across which the "neutralist" attitude could gradually be argued away.

But Arab misgivings about the West are trivial compared with Arab hatred of Israel —the American reasoning continues. The Jewish state far surpasses Britain, the United States, "imperialism," or the USSR as the Number One enemy in the Arabs' mind. Consequently, unilateral military aid to Israel at this time would fan their resentment to white-hot fire.

Contrary to the Israeli argument, the Arabs would not be led by envy to ask for the same concessions: they have seen larger gifts go to Greece and Turkey without succumbing. They would be utterly unable to comprehend that aid to Israel was intended

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against the Russians and not themselves. They would interpret the American policy as the most glaring confirmation of their already deep-seated belief that the United States was responsible for Israel's emergence in the first place and continues to be the chief aider and abettor of her menacing growth. At the very least, the Americans fear, the Arabs would see any kind of regional defense structure thereafter as a stratagem to use them as cannon fodder while Israel sat basking in reserve, under a bright shower of money.

And conceivably, under the incitement of the build-up for Israel, the latent "suicide complex" of the Arabs might drive even the wealthy feudalists, aristocrats, and landowners headlong into Moscow's arms. So goes the American argument.

OBVIOUSLY, Tel Aviv and Washington disagree sharply and clearly in their appraisal of the Arab temperament and the correct methods of dealing with it. In the Israeli view, every issue in Arab-Israeli relations on which the United States could exert a decisive influence has been complicated and obfuscated by the perpetually timorous question: how will the Arabs react? In the American view, Israel has not yet drawn the necessary statesmanlike inferences from the obvious fact that the Middle East is larger and more important than Zion.

A glance at the various disputes to date between Israel and the Arabs involving American intervention reveals the same difference in approach on each occasion. In the case of the Huleh Marsh drainage incident, the Israelis considered UN and American action an unjustifiable interference with a useful project that threatened only the malarial mosquitoes in nearby Arab territory. In the case of the Suez Canal, the United States delayed UN action while laboring long and vainly to persuade Egypt to cease its unlawful molestation of Israel-bound shipping. The effort failing, the Americans finally joined in UN condemnation of the Egyptian blockade. But the molestation continues without UN counteraction: the Americans keep praying that the problem will fade away, possibly through Anglo-Egyptian rapprochement, and perhaps even through a direct understanding between Naguib and Israel—of which there are some present glimmers of hope.

It is important to stress here that there is *no essential difference in purpose* between Washington and Tel Aviv on the Suez question. Like the Israelis, the Americans (and the UN) regard Egyptian impediments at the Canal as intolerable interference that must cease. The divergence is on how far and fast to go in obtaining this redress. Similar agreement over objectives prevails on two other major issues—or chronic situations—which must somehow be regulated if Arab-Israeli relations are ever to become stable. These, extensively and rather fruitlessly debated at the current General Assembly, are (1) the "state of war" which, according to the Arabs, still exists between them and Israel, and (2) the final disposition of the Palestine Arab refugee problem.

The United States has made clear its belief that Israel is a permanent part of the Middle East. This government also seems just as persuaded as Israel that there can be no "state of war" and that Arab insistence to the contrary is a deplorable obstacle to regional security. A like obstacle, Americans and Israelis concur, is the presence of 600,000 to 800,000 displaced persons in limbo just beyond Israel's borders. Both agree that most of these refugees can never return to their abandoned homes and that Israel has some material responsibility to help in their resettlement elsewhere. But they do not agree at all on how hard to push for this resettlement or for a general peace.

APART from occasional border flurries and the Suez obstruction, physical force is not applied in the "war" which drags on between Israel and her neighbors. Armistices now more than three years old—reinforced by the Anglo-Franco-American warning two years ago that new disturbances would not be tolerated—regulate the frontiers with fair efficiency. But there is no peace, no diplomatic intercourse, no legal trade, no travel, no communication. Arab public and official opinion is today as volubly anti-Israeli as on the day the Jewish state was proclaimed.

U. S. policy, as we have noted, is formally committed to a slow and steady effort, through UN agencies and American diplomacy, toward lowering the temperature. It places rather more of its hopes on an indirect approach to the problem. Washington favors, for example, offering the Arabs a sense of

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community with the Western world through a mutual defense system, assuaging mass poverty with Point Four "know-how" and eventual larger economic aid, and encouraging the establishment of stable governments.

The Americans are not unduly alarmed by the breakdown of parliamentary institutions in the Middle East. Indeed, Washington would like to see more "little Ataturks" arise on the pattern of Egypt's Naguib and Syria's Shishekly: untypical Arabs who seem to be cutting away from their own backward and selfish ruling class and to want to foster political, economic, and social reforms which may produce a tolerably modern society. Such leaders, Washington thinks, have enough to do without attempting simultaneously to close the safety valve of hatred against Israel. In fact, they would be inviting an assassin's bullet if they tried to do so. Naguib showed foolhardy courage merely by paying an unprecedented courtesy call on a Cairo synagogue. Prominent among his backers is the fanatically anti-foreign and anti-Israeli Moslem Brotherhood, which enforces its doctrine with pistol, knife, and bomb. If, in Damascus, Shishekly finds it necessary to brandish a sword at Israel—his latest gesture has been to cast an eye towards Israel's Galilee border and aver that there was no room in the Middle East for both Israel and Syria—it is merely for local consumption, and the Israelis in Washington are blandly advised to ignore it.

The Israelis, however, do not agree that it should be ignored. Ben Gurion's prompt reply to Shishekly was that "Damascus is no farther from Galilee than Galilee is from Damascus." Nor do the Israelis feel that Washington should ignore it. Is Shishekly the "strong man" he is advertised to be, they ask, or is he not? If he is, then let him be strong—and suppress those elements which foment strife with Israel. We have nationalist fanatics too, say the Israelis, but we also have a government that keeps them in hand. If there cannot be peace, Washington should insist there be at least some proof of peaceful *intention*. We have made repeated offers to seek a settlement, but the Arabs refuse even to sit down and talk with us, the Israelis point out. If we really had intentions of expanding, we could have seized Jordan with a single battalion after King Abdullah was murdered last year. We could have spiked Naguib's military coup d'état against King Farouk this July simply by moving troops toward our Egyptian borders, which would have immobilized half Naguib's army.

Let Washington now urge Naguib to end at least Egypt's part in the Arab boycott and cold war which are blocking all progress toward Middle Eastern prosperity. Let Washington everywhere in the Middle East demand, the Israelis urge, sober responsible foreign policies as the price of American aid.

IN THE unsolved Palestinian refugee crisis, the American tactic again, as always, is persuasion—through UN agencies and through UN funds, which are mostly American dollars. Scientific survey has reliably determined that large tracts of unused land in various Arab-ruled territories can be opened to the refugees for substantial settlement by irrigation and other improvement projects. Such developments would also be vastly beneficial to the native populations and economies of the host countries. The United States is contributing the major portion of an envisaged $250,000,000 fund for use by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in getting the refugees out of their camps and off the dole and permanently reintegrating them through works projects in new homes and lands. A resolution in support of such a three-year program, which the UN had already been striving to implement in the area itself during the previous year, was unanimously passed by the General Assembly last January, with Arab concurrence—and reaffirmed, with Iraq the only Arab state abstaining, at the current Assembly session.

But the Arab spokesmen have insisted on retaining the principle that their vote in no way relinquishes the ultimate right of the refugees to repatriation to Israel. They have moreover made it clear that execution of the program is the UN's responsibility, not theirs. True, a firmer tone among non-Arab states was observable during the recent Assembly debate, with one orator after another summoning the Arab governments to participate fully in a refugee solution. But the Arabs were adamant in interpreting the UN plan as merely temporary. They succeeded in obtaining reaffirmation in the resolution's preamble that the program was "without prejudice" to the refugees' claims for ultimate

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repatriation to Israel. As for positive cooperation with UNRWA, it has hitherto been constricted in effect to aid purely for relief. And UNRWA itself has made so little headway on resettlement that it had to ask the UN this year for a larger relief appropriation than previously envisaged, at the expense of reintegration funds.

Although Syria has indicated readiness to serve as the first Arab state on UNRWA's Advisory Commission, such entry gives no guarantee of support for the resettlement aspects of the agency's mission. It is now being quite firmly reported that Syria has also agreed to a $30,000,000 UNRWA plan—disguised as "employment" in order to humor scruples in Damascus—to populate sparse territories in the north with 18,000 refugee families. Such an agreement, when officially confirmed, will certainly represent a notable break in Arab intransigence, even if the Syrians still formally cling to the myth of repatriation. Yet, knowing the Arab obsession for "revenge," one hesitates to acclaim the Syrian change of refugee policy as more than a hopeful beginning. (At best, it affects scarcely 10 per cent of the total refugee mass.) Meanwhile it is a fact that, up to this writing, UNRWA has been able to accomplish little in its main purpose of resettlement, as distinguished from relief. Jordan has allowed the initiation of some projects, limited by the physical inadequacies of her territory; a few thousand refugees have found jobs through UNRWA employment bureaus, and a handful of others have started enterprises of their own with agency loans. But to date virtually no displaced Arabs have been settled on ground put to use by the UN's ambitious program.

THE apparent hurdle has been the refugees' unwillingness to yield their dreams of return to Palestine, even though their Palestine no longer exists and could hardly be restored. But the real obstruction has been the Arab states' unwillingness to accept UNRWA's accent on resettlement.

For Washington, this is related to other aspects of Arab hostility toward Israel, which cannot be softened except, possibly, by patient reasoning and conciliation. For Tel Aviv, on the other hand, Arab non-cooperation is simply a political dodge to exploit the turbulent, dangerous mass of refugees as a bargaining counter against Israel and the West. The refugees clamor to go home, the Israelis charge, because Arab politicians keep telling them it is possible. This enables the politicians in turn to tell the UN, the Palestine Conciliation Commission, and the Western powers that peace is unattainable as long as Israel does not make amends for the misery she has inflicted upon so many innocents by what the Arabs call "aggression."

But if the Arab rulers were truly concerned, they would at least contribute to the alleviation of this misery. That they do not, but leave humanitarian effort cynically to others, is a token of their bad faith. The only appropriate retort to such hypocrisy, the Israelis assert, is condemnation by the conscience of the world and determined pressure by the great powers separately, and the UN collectively, on the Arab regimes to come to terms on this and all other issues—by face-to-face negotiation with Israel. "Despite all disappointments and denunciations," as Ambassador Abba Eban eloquently and delicately told the Assembly in mid-November, "Israel continues to believe in the ultimate truth of Arab-Israeli reconciliation."

In the last analysis, the Israeli thesis is that the Arabs—like the Soviets—respect power alone. They do not appreciate compromise, mistaking persuasion for supplication and reasonableness for weakness. Hence the American policy of rational argument and conciliation merely encourages them to greater stubbornness and a higher price. The only way to break down Arab resistance on all fronts—provided the cause is just, and in Israeli opinion it is—is to take a position so firmly that there is no room for bazaar-style bargaining. So the Israelis contend.

IT IS quite true that, on the basis of the visible evidence, Israel has had more success in handling the Arabs by the method she now recommends than the State Department has had by using its method. The Jewish community in Palestine was willing to proceed peaceably after Partition, but when the Arabs chose war they fought back, knocked the Arabs silly, and that—barring an unlikely internal Israeli collapse in the unpredictable future—was that.

But force is hardly an acceptable instrument of democratic diplomacy in this pre-

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sumably enlightened second half of the 20th century. If a firm attitude by the great powers fails, what then? Economic sanctions? This may be the ultimate weapon to bring nearby Iran to book, but it seems to have far less potential effectiveness against the Arab states. Severance of diplomatic relations? In Iran this denouement was chosen by the Iranians themselves: it remains to be seen whether, somewhat nonplussed by the British refusal thereafter to panic, they will finally turn reasonable. Otherwise, after diplomatic rupture, what further recourse does a policy of firmness have against the Arabs? Occupation by the West? This has never been dreamed of by the Israelis, let alone recommended. Yet, many in Washington think, it is the logical prescription *in extremis* for tough treatment if the Arabs call the Western "bluff" on all milder varieties of toughness. And the big imperialist stick, though it may have been fashionable for Queen Victoria's captains, is no longer possible in our time—not for our side, at any rate. Our public opinion and morality would not tolerate it. And even if we could brush principles aside, we would surely risk losing the rest of Asia and obliterating the chief external marks which distinguish us from the totalitarian bully.

But it is also true that persuasion has got Israel nowhere with the Arabs on main issues. Fairness requires us to note that Israel, though she has been stubborn too, has made far more gestures of compromise than her antagonists. Israel once offered to take back 100,000 refugees, but the Arabs never budged from their extreme demand that she take back every one who wanted to return. Israel has agreed to discuss refugee settlement as a matter apart from over-all peace negotiations, but the Arabs have declined to discuss anything at all with Israel. Two months ago Israel voluntarily began redeeming the frozen bank balances of the Arab refugees, but the balances left behind by Jewish refugees in Iraq and other Arab territories lie as immobile as ever.

For that matter, neither can the State Department point to any measurable success in its own efforts at conciliation, not even when great sums of money have been on hand to lubricate the wheels of amity. There was, for example, a plan under study within this year to devote as much as $100,000,000 for economic aid to Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. But it had to be set aside because the primitive economies of these countries lacked the capacity to absorb effectively such large-scale help and, more significantly, because neither their rulers nor their peoples had the will to cooperate.

Nevertheless, nature abhors a policy vacuum just as much as a physical vacuum, and one must go on searching for a solution. A certain group of men close to, but not part of, Middle Eastern affairs believe another way to be available that combines the better parts of both approaches analyzed above. These men are Americans—technicians, administrators—sympathetic to Israel as a progressive state, sympathetic to the Arabs as a misruled, downtrodden people, and of course sympathetic to the dilemma of American diplomacy in the broiling Middle East.

None can say if their program is certain of good results. It is founded on common sense rather than on the subtleties of diplomacy or the dogmatism of special interests. As such, it may appeal more to reason than the emotional factors of the situation permit. But it is, this writer thinks, worthy of thoughtful consideration, and perhaps even of application.

THE key to solution of the Arab-Israeli deadlock and American frustration, the planners suggest, is alleviation of mutual Arab-Israeli fears, enlightened satisfaction of self-interest, willingness to give a little in order to receive much, and—since this is the Orient—a scrupulous saving of face. The points of departure are the Arab trade boycott against Israel and the refugee problem, two irritants that do great harm to *both* sides.

The United States, in concert with other powers, or unilaterally, must:

1. Make it unmistakably plain to the Arabs again that Israel is in the Middle East to stay, that we want her to stay, and that we intend to help her stay by giving her—as we already are giving her—all legitimate economic assistance.

2. Offer a program of economic assistance to the Arab states which will be generous in scope, international in range, but conditioned on genuine Arab cooperation in the advancement of regional welfare.

3. Guarantee Israel and the Arabs against attack by each other.

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Israel, which was the victor on the battlefield and can therefore more honorably make the first new move of conciliation, must:

1. Reiterate her pledges of non-aggression.
2. Invite refugee representatives to tour the areas fled by the Arabs and see for themselves the sheerly physical impossibility of their mass return to Israel.
3. Reaffirm her existing offer to pay compensation for abandoned property—and stress that she is willing to pay handsomely, on terms to be fixed by negotiation.

The Arab states, in turn, must facilitate this Israeli program by:

1. Authorizing and encouraging the refugee representatives to accept Israel's invitation to inspect their old homesteads.
2. Pledging the inviolability of Israel's frontiers and lifting the boycott, *thus making it possible for Israel to pay large refugee compensation with savings from lower defense preparedness costs and enlarged trade.*

EACH side has pumped out oceans of propaganda to prove that the boycott is doing desperate damage to the other side. The truth is that both are right.

Isolation from Israeli markets has undeniably hurt the Arabs, for Palestine was once a large, and frequently their largest, customer. Although Palestine was also a source of finished goods, the balance of trade was greatly in Arab favor. Today Israel's neighbors are glutted with surpluses, their perishable farm produce clamoring for nearby markets, their other exportable commodities bearing the burden of long-distance freight charges, the royalty revenues of the oil-producing countries sharply reduced, the trade balances of all the Arab states sagging, unemployment multiplied, mass misery more acute, and internal regimes unsteadier than ever. Arab contrabanders strive to circumvent the blockade by every conceivable device of trans-shipment and smuggling. All this is suffered without any compensating political or economic advantages.

But it should not be supposed that the boycott has not hurt Israel too. She is now compelled to import fuel at ruinous cost from as far away as Venezuela instead of piping it into Haifa from the Arab hinterland. She has to bring food from overseas and pay for it in scarce foreign exchange—depleting her cash resources for import of the machinery and industrial raw materials vital to her economic expansion, and inevitably also shrinking the amount of food available to her underfed population. Barred from the great natural Arab market close at hand, she is forced to seek customers in remote places like Finland and Argentina, and to deepen her dependence on artificial sources of foreign credit, such as philanthropy, loans, and governmental grants.

In her present straits Israel clearly cannot pay adequate compensation for Arab refugee property losses—not even with the recent windfall in West German promises of indemnities to the survivors of Nazism. This is a simple arithmetical fact that her adversaries should be more willing to understand once Israel has publicly committed herself to pay refugee claims on a large scale.

The current Israeli agreement with the Palestine Conciliation Commission to begin release of blocked Arab accounts, estimated at a total of close to $15,000,000, only skims the surface of potential Israeli capacity to help the Palestinian refugees. There is a great reservoir of "new" funds that could suddenly be created from Israeli economies and profits if the mutually disastrous boycott were abolished. Its scale can be estimated from the example of the additional $20,000,000 a year it costs Israel just to import oil from overseas.

As there are no public figures for the additional military expenditure Israel carries because of the armed hostility all around her, no sure estimates can be ventured; but some put it at $30,000,000 annually. (The extra military costs to Syria and other potential belligerents are, in ratio to their own economies, likewise onerous.) If Israel's top-heavy arms budget were reduced by open declarations of non-aggression unequivocally stiffened by international guarantees, then another rich source of funds would become available.

Should the United States make such a commitment? The framers of this program reply that we are already virtually committed by previous declaration, that our military leaders in any case are now reckoning the Middle East as absolutely essential to our global strategy, and that any move by us which could reduce Israeli-Arab antagonism must be a net comparative gain no matter what the cost.

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SUBSTANTIAL sums from military and trade savings, it is envisaged, could be paid periodically by Israel into a central fund that would be internationally administered. This fund would then be draftable for settlement of all Arab-Israeli war claims, not excluding even Israel's own bill for damages.

It would not, naturally, begin to meet the huge costs of irrigation and reclamation of lands for Arab refugee resettlement. But the UN has already resigned itself to lavish spending for this purpose. The United States, as we have seen, wants to make an independent and large contribution of her own to general Middle Eastern economic advancement, if only enough workable projects can be launched and sincere Arab collaboration obtained.

Such projects are achievable, it is contended, provided they spring not from narrow, impractical local designs but from planning which overlaps national boundaries and aims at results for whole regions instead of for feudal domains. The major feasible development schemes in the Middle East are all intrinsically international: rational development of the Jordan River, for example, must involve both Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; proper use of the Euphrates must join Syria, Iraq, and Turkey as partners.

The challenge to policy-makers is not to find the projects or even the money, since the investment, no matter how large, would be insignificant as against our stake in the area and our expenditures elsewhere—and could pay inestimable dividends in the ultimate saving of American lives.

The challenge is to learn how to use the money wisely. Not for the enrichment of potentates and the strengthening of their material capacity to resist the reasonable demands of Western diplomacy, but in solid exchange for commitments that will genuinely benefit the Arab regimes in common with their peoples, all their neighbors, and the entire democratic world community.

This proposed new approach to the Middle Eastern conflict has, at least on paper, evident virtues. It combines the firmness advocated by Israel with the moderation practiced by the United States. It makes unreasonable demands on no one, and it offers each participant more than it takes away. It also has obvious weaknesses, chiefly in that it requires greater imagination, bolder action, and better faith than are normally evident in Levantine affairs.

BECAUSE the present survey has lingered longest on the Arab-Israeli problem, it may leave the impression that this is the major hindrance to Middle Eastern pacification. To see that such is decidedly not the case, one has only to think of Iran or the Nile, where the West is embroiled without the remotest reference to Israel, or of Cairo last January and Baghdad only last month, when street mobs rioted against colonialism and their own inept rulers. Moreover, it may well be that a *modus vivendi* between Israel and the Arabs will emerge, not as a new formula out of a diplomatic hat, but as a result of favorable situations or trends now only dimly perceivable.

One such situation is the imminent changeover in the White House: the Arabs, who have felt committed to perpetual fist-shaking at their self-invented image of Harry Truman as a Zionist devil, may feel absolved from their no-compromise vows with the advent of a fresh and "unblemished" Dwight Eisenhower. And one such trend is the apparent concentration in Egypt by Naguib, and by some others elsewhere, on internal reforms which, if wholeheartedly pursued, could change the entire direction of external Arab policy. Indeed the seemingly enlightened exploits of the Naguib regime have lately inspired a spate of diplomatic and press dispatches forecasting rapprochement between Egypt and the "imperialist" world—not excluding Israel.

This happy ending may in fact arrive. A disturbing and contradictory aspect of Naguib's behavior—his leadership in the Arab din against German reparations for Israel—can perhaps be explained away as a sly gesture toward automatic Egyptian mass reflexes. However, this writer is restrained from all-out optimism by the sobering thought that, in the Arab Middle East, the conclusions of logic and common sense too often have no more solidity than the mirages of the desert. But one thing is sure: whatever the device to achieve it, some kind of imaginative approach to an Arab-Israeli settlement is urgently required. Otherwise Israel, the Arab world, and the West will continue to drift toward a debacle whose cost may be beyond all computation.

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TERRORS OF YOKNAPATAWPHA AND FAIRFIELD

As Reflected in Their Regional Fiction

STEVEN MARCUS

GENERALLY speaking, there are two kinds of stories being written in America today—Southern stories and Connecticut stories. These are more than geographical divisions: each is a distinct school with its own traditions, themes, techniques, social ideals, mythology, and literary ancestors; a "Southern" writer might very well live in Connecticut, though perhaps there are no "Connecticut" writers living in the South.

Thus three prize-winning stories of last year's *O. Henry Awards* collection, for instance, all apparently quite different, are "Southern" in theme and tone. In outline, these stories are most eventful. Private Meadows of Harris Downey's "The Hunters" wanders away from his company one day during the war, meets another detached soldier, and with him spends a day of slaughter, killing some goats, a German prisoner, and finally three parachuting airmen of unidentified allegiance. In Eudora Welty's "The Burning," the slave Florabel witnesses the destruction of the family mansion by fire and the suicides of her old-maid mistresses. Ottilie, the prostitute heroine of Truman Capote's "The House of Flowers," marries her lover, leaves the city with him, suffers mistreatment at his hands, and finally remains with him in a flowery cabin in the backwoods of Haiti. Yet all this "action" seems oddly illusory: nothing really happens. The common characteristics of these stories so full of incident is a kind of breathless stillness, an unmoving atmosphere of vague emotion and pure language.

THE source of this paradox is in the estranged personalities of the central figures. They are all inarticulate, unable to speak coherently, and in their obscure consciousness the action of the stories is rendered remote and almost meaningless. Thus Miss Welty describes Florabel: "Herself was an unknown, like a queen, somebody she heard called, even cried for. As a slave she was earth's most detached visitor. The world had not touched her." So do Mr. Capote and Mr. Downey conceive their characters. Unlike Melville's Billy Budd or Kafka's Gregor Samsa, who, though they cannot speak, do think or move in purposeful ways, these people are inarticulate in the very nature of their being; they are impervious to experience—detached from the earth.

Often enough, of course, this sort of inarticulateness has been used in literature to represent, not an estrangement from the earth but a profounder contact with it;

FICTIONAL America is divided regionally into two parts, STEVEN MARCUS suggests here. Most American short stories, that is to say, have the cultural climate of the South or the northeastern suburbs of New York. The inhabitants of both areas are depicted as enduring a pretty grim existence; the more enlightened suburbanites suffer, if anything, lives of the more agonized desperation. Mr. Marcus, at present working towards his doctorate at Cambridge University, was born in New York City in 1928, attended Columbia University, and has taught English at Indiana University and the City College of New York. This is his first published article. For it, Mr. Marcus read the following volumes of short stories: *Best American Short Stories, 1951* and *The Best of the Best American Short Stories 1915-1950*, both edited by Martha Foley and published by Houghton Mifflin; *Prize Stories of 1951: The O. Henry Awards*, edited by Herschell Brickell (Doubleday); *New Directions XIII* (New Directions); *Sextet: Six "Story" Discoveries*, edited by Whit and H. S. Burnett (McKay); *Fancies and Goodnights*, by John Collier (Doubleday); *Many Are Called*, by Edward Newhouse (Sloane); *In the Absence of Angels*, by Hortense Calisher (Little, Brown).

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sophisticated writers sometimes try to find in the "silent" peasant or proletarian a higher wisdom than their own, perhaps a higher suffering. But in these stories the literary convention seems almost turned around upon itself: the speechlessness of the characters belongs not to them but to their authors, who seem to expend all their art in efforts to hold the world at arm's length. Thus an art form which has increasingly been concerned with examining the way we experience, ends up making experience itself inaccessible. Where the "classical" short story preserved the opposition of mind and reality, with the writer attempting to discover or impose upon the world a certain logical order, attempting to understand a world whose independent reality was assumed, in these stories reality has become a function of character, while at the same time character itself, become vague and ambiguous, recedes into the obscurity of speechlessness. There has resulted, in a sense, a true unity of form and matter, producing perfect, "seamless" objects, internally consistent but with none of the shocks and roughnesses of reality; this is the popular modern idea of the short story as an "epiphany," a single symbolic event opening out, not on some general but still definite truth about man and his society, but on nothing less than the universe itself—a broadening of focus so great as to produce merely an attractive blur.

THAT such a development in literature should be associated with the South is not surprising. For though it is said with much truth that the South is the one region of America that still preserves a literary tradition, this tradition is preserved at a greater and greater cost of separation from the real world—indeed, even the sharpest and most tangible Southern realities exist often in defiance of the facts of modern life. But the tendency I have tried to describe goes far beyond the geographical limits of the South; it belongs to many modern writers who, finding themselves unable to impose any publicly comprehensible order on their experience, have fled into the autonomous world of their inner selves, mistaking it for the autonomous world of art; technique and understanding become one, and when that happens it is always at the expense of understanding.

Support for this notion is to be found in *New Directions XIII,* the annual of avant-garde writing published by James Laughlin. This large and well-made anthology includes all kinds of experimental writing, and it is a compliment to Mr. Laughlin's devotion to the cause of literature that so much bad writing, half conceived and poorly managed, should receive such consistently attractive publication. The most notable writing in this particular volume is by Robert Creely, a young American living in France. Mr. Creely pushes the "limited point of view" to its conclusion, for he has tried to eliminate the artist entirely, and has thereby done away with that intelligence which persuades itself and the reader that circumstances are half perceived and half created. The dialectic between reality and the mind that perceives it is here attenuated almost to nothing.

Here is a sample of his writing:

> I put it this way. That I am, say, myself, that this or this feel, you can't have, of from that man or this, me you can't take it. And what I would do, with any of this, is beyond you, and mine. But for this time, yours too.

Or:

> She said, what did you expect from any of it, being fourteen as you were, or any age, for that matter, what was it you wanted to get out of something like that, that if you knew you couldn't, and didn't, later, much want, but just then wanted, as though you knew that later it would have to come to me, this kind of thing, to ask me what I thought and did I understand, as if there, in any of it, was what I was supposed to understand.

This writing is not at all the "endless conversation" of Ezra Pound's *Cantos,* nor is it the participial flux of Gertrude Stein's prose. In both of these one senses a controlling intelligence creating the conversation and the time. Mr. Creely wants us to believe that this prose represents *him,* that he is actually writing this as himself and about himself. He has removed the "aesthetic dis-

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tance," the effort to control experience, remnants of which we still find in the O. Henry prize stories: for it he substitutes his own person—immediate and easy to identify. What he is saying is that experience is so difficult to grasp that the traditional attempt must be given up. He delivers us willy-nilly to events and to his mind involved, indeed totally assimilated, with them, rather than to our practiced sense of the intelligence behind the story, manipulating events, standing as interpreter between the world and the reader.

Although he fails, Mr. Creely at least has the merit of clearing away the speechless, marginal characters of the other stories, and presents to us the undigested but unconfined consciousness of himself. The effect is deeply disturbing. Not because Mr. Creely's reveries embarrass us, but because his stories obliterate the double vision of the artist—that effort to give to circumstances the sensible order that they seldom seem to possess alone.

INARTICULATENESS, however striking, is not wholly descriptive of the South of modern writing, although it is one of its main features. Except for Faulkner and Eudora Welty, most of the Southern writers are quite young and, as I have said, they come from all parts of the country. One finds "Southern" stories—stories not distinct in style, tone, and intent from those which are obviously about the South—being written about Wyoming, New Jersey, and even Canada. The South is no longer simply a region (it is doubtful that it ever was); it is a state of mind convenient for any writer who has read Faulkner or Katherine Anne Porter. The influence of Faulkner is becoming unhappily obvious; at least twenty-five of the anthologized stories are variations of one or another of his. We must be aware, however, that this development has not been primarily impelled by any *reality* existing particularly in the South, but by the *notions* that these young writers have absorbed from elsewhere about modern civilization. The country of their fiction is purely conventional and literary. They stand in relation to Faulkner as the later 19th-century poets of nature stood to Wordsworth. Their primary experience is literature, and the result of that has been the creation of a set of beliefs about the culture of the South which seem, almost automatically, to infuse magic life into any fiction.

Most of these stories are about some experience of childhood and all of them are rural, for, it seems, there are no cities in the South. Cities, wherever they are mentioned, are inevitably the repositories of poor, outcast relatives, or of brothels; and no one in a city ever leads a life that can be of interest or consequence to the characters in the story. Consequently, ambition and status as we know them—even social meaning itself—do not exist in the South.

"The Temperate Zone," by Elizabeth Enright, tells of a young Southern woman holed up with her infant in a prefabricated hut in Maine or Canada—some place, at any rate, where it never stops snowing. She bathes the child, thinks of her own sunny and flower-scented childhood, of how different for her it all is now, and of the awful imperturbability of her Northern husband. That is all. The writer believes she has fulfilled her purpose simply by pronouncing the terms of the myth; nothing has to happen, either "objectively" or "subjectively." The "South" evokes the ideas of fecundity and freedom, sunshine and sensuality. Ostensibly it serves, for Miss Enright and others, as Italy and Africa served in the lives of so many French artists (Stendhal, Flaubert, Gide), to liberate her for the moment from the demands of adulthood and responsibility. In the South life is seen to radiate an aura of primitive simplicity and pastoral directness which would dissolve in the complex, trying life of maturity and urbanism. (This is, of course, not completely true of Faulkner, whose subject is often the impact of the civilized and the urban upon the primitive.) The South, we are let know, is the one place left where there is enough leisure, memory, nature, and social distinction to give life meaning—but this "meaning," in

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the generalized, self-consciously mythical forms in whch it is presented, verges constantly on the meaningless.

THE terms of the myth are quite simple: the South is the Garden of Eden. It is a real garden, for it is a wilderness that has been settled and where flowers are cultivated. No one ever does any work in these stories. If one lives in a decaying mansion, a stray servant occasionally does a little dusting; if one lives in a ramshackle cabin, one either waits until it is full of junk and then moves out, taking along only the corn-shuck mattress, or one just lets the cabin collapse of its own weakness, and then one builds another just like it. It is, moreover, the Garden of Eden out of which the South was so rudely forced by the Civil War. And it is the Eden of childhood which every child abandons when he acquires a sense of his own corruption or guilt, and which he carries around as a lively image for the rest of his life (for the creator of this child does not burden him with that civilizing mechanism, repression). As we shall see, the myth of the acquisition of guilt is used again and again, but not as myths are usually used. As Richard Chase has shown, the myth, in most art, is *added* to the action—it broadens and deepens our associations about the action of the story; we say that it "thickens the texture." Here the myth is all there is. One comes to believe that these myths of Eden and of being "cast out" are the only sources of feeling the writers have, and that without them they would be unable to experience at all. The effect of this dependence on myth has been to thin out the texture of the story, to devitalize the myth itself, and to make the reader's response mechanical.

In "The Butcherbirds," by Esther Patt, a little girl wanders off one afternoon with the "queer" woman of the town, a junk collector, who takes her for a ride in her wagon and teaches her about nature. When the little girl learns that butcherbirds are predatory birds who kill snakes and mice by impaling them on thornbushes, she is horrified. But this woman of nature tells her, "We caint hurt butcherbirds, 'cause butcherbirds aint bad. It's a sorry sight—the snakes, it is—but it aint bad of the butchers. It's their way. They's just like folks—and so's the snakes," and the little girl, who had "never compared animals with people," sees the order and necessity of nature, understands that what is natural cannot be evil, and thus, "enlightened," rejoins her parents. This story may remind us of Wordsworth; the strange lady is quite like the old leech-gatherer on the moors: it is a kind of "Resolution and Independence" at a tender age. But unlike Wordsworth, who knew that he was brought up "alike by beauty and by fear," the writer discredits the original insight of the child. By compelling the little girl to deny that the butcherbirds are ugly and horrible and by explaining them as "natural," the writer has weakened the myth of the expulsion from Eden—the acceptance of pain and mortality. For if the writer does not see that these birds *are* awful, then the myth which sets out to recapture the vision of childhood and include it in a larger one is meaningless. If one chooses only the redemption, then the sin, the fall, and the hard labor—in fact, all the things that we experience concretely, and which are so painfully important that they have to be redeemed—are ignored.

In other stories too, the Wordsworthian image is present. "Her Breath on the Windowpane," by William Goyen, is about an old Texas woman who finds herself isolated forever from her family, whom she has worked hard and long to support and hold together. And although the story has overtones of "Michael" and "The Last of the Flock," there is a difference.

> There is a pane of glass between me and the world, seems like, and nothin in the world can get to me anymore, only press its nose against the pane and look through at me. All the world seems flat-nosed against this glass . . . and I am separated from everythin in the whole world and feel alone and lost and afraid with no one needin me for anythin. . . .

This is not romanticism, for it is not critical in the way that most romantic writing is. In all the collections under examination there is not a single story of social protest,

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or even one that strongly implies a criticism of society's institutions. Despair, in many cases, is substituted for the hard resistance to fortune and the endurance of calamity of the romantic man of nature. And the sense of loss that we perceived in the stories first mentioned we perceive again—experience itself has evaded our grasp.

The figures in the three O. Henry prize stories have at least the virtue of being "natural objects" like stones or trees, they are accessible to observation. The quasi-romanticism of Miss Patt and Mr. Goyen goes one step further into the unreal. Their error is one that is becoming more and more characteristic of our literature: it is a tendency toward abstraction. Behind this tendency is the old liberalistic fear that an idea decreases in validity as it gains concreteness and applies to fewer people. The characters of "The Butcherbirds" and "Her Breath on the Windowpane" are only puppets, and their supposed perplexities do not affect us because we recognize again that they are perplexities stated in the generalized language of intellectuals—prosaic, abstract, and moralistic. The hyperbolic speech of the Ancient Mariner or the hard idiom of the Old Cumberland Beggar have a materiality that these writers never attain.

THE nostalgic quest for the "natural," the search for simple temperaments, the persistence of the theme of childhood—how crucial these must come to be to writers who consciously use subjects that recommend themselves by their very mustiness and historical exhaustion. This kind of false romanticism is always turning up. It is false because it reduces any sense of wholeness or actuality to the "symbolic" or "mythical." Even dialect, one of the most concrete and delineating devices of writing, so important as a condition of literal reality in Mark Twain, Anderson, and Hemingway (the "classical" writers in the tradition of rural America), has become merely a symbol, the almost ideological representation of a firm, homely grasp on the temper of the country, and therefore on all human circumstance. It is a symbol which many of the modern short story writers use as a convenient substitute for understanding.

Finally, so many of the stories have as their motif the acceptance of guilt. Several contain a scene in which a young boy bruises the head of a snake, and one, "Dawn of Remembered Spring," by Jesse Stuart, describes a boy's wholesale slaughter of snakes. When he has ended the slaughter, he discovers two snakes copulating; bewildered, he tells his parents and relatives about it; they are amused, he remains puzzled. This is "mythologies" with a vengeance. Is the boy playing the traditional role of purging the guilt of man? Is he supposed to discover when he grows up that pleasure and delight are always associated with archetypal guilt, and its symbol, the serpent? The immediate result is guilt. We are led to assume that when the boy grows up he will arrive at an adult resignation to the paradoxical conditions of life; but how can we be sure amid this welter of myths? Mr. Stuart is too delicate with his wordless devices to let us know just how this grim embrace of reality takes place.

Comparable to Mr. Stuart's story and representative of too many others is "The Jersey Heifer," by Peggy Harding Love, another "Southern" idyll about guilt and sin, from the perspective of New Jersey. A young couple settle down on a farm ("Farming is a way of life," says the wise and intrepid husband), and the wife, an innocent, muses about the farm as if it were the fantastic Eden of the antebellum South.

> She saw the whole farm as a combination Eden and Noah's Ark, where she and Joe . . . and the cows and horses could live on equal terms, in innocence and mutual respect. In her heart she could not believe that God had made her truly different from the animals she loved, born in sin with a heritage of guilt; and she would gladly have traded all her human knowledge and foresight for Pax's [the dog's] trustfulness or the Jersey heifer's wild, free spirit. "There's a serpent in your garden," Joe had teased her one day in May, holding up a five-foot black snake he had found behind the barn, but Phoebe's faith had not been shaken.

The heifer, however, refuses to cooperate,

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breaks her neck trying to eat some apples (more mythology), and has to be killed—a sobering experience for the young wife, who realizes now that after the Flood Noah's Ark was probably chopped up for firewood. This is a howlingly bad story, but the particularity of its badness is typical of a genre.

All the features I have described—the mute figure, the writer who doesn't exist, the South as a ubiquitous presence, the specious romantic mythology—are separate images emerging from the same impulse. Caught in a confusion of unlocated emotions, the writer tries to establish some simple relation between an emotion and an object, to locate some definable thing which is historical or archetypal, that will adequately account for the existence of these emotions and thereby identify them—like a blind child groping for something to latch on to in a strange room. Although they are so easy to mock, these stories attempt to recover personal responsibility, a concrete "love-object," an unambiguous guilt to replace the general anxiety of industrial life. This is also why none of the stories is critical; why, in fact, they are forced into affirmation—the real spirit of most of our current fiction. Because they seek objects for their love, they must uncritically affirm any world that seems to contain those objects.

For the first time in many years one can read a series of stories whose only point is that the *possibility* of feeling does exist. But at what an expensive effort have they been written, at what a dissipation of grace and conviction—for all these stories involve a sacrifice of the intellect. It may well be that the mere rediscovery of a clearly "objectified" emotion is so disarming that these artists can meet it only with simple awe. Their temptation is to affirm by hook or crook anything that is permissive of emotion, and to do away with any notion of a larger, comprehensive reality to which they are responsible. One of the dangers of complex, "symbolic" writing is that it so easily becomes a kind of mindlessness, and in these stories several writers have taken the easy way.

The "Connecticut" story reveals our cultural estrangement from another angle. Connecticut, as everyone has come to know, is a grassy New York. Like the "South," it has been altogether symbolized and allegorized; the same modern cottage or the same tired advertising man of thirty-five with his tweed suits and his income between twelve and twenty thousand dollars a year, is relied upon in these stories just as are the barns and streams and guilt-ridden children in the others. All the woods are like Central Park; the trains make Grand Central Station, the icy center of Hell, in fifty-five minutes. The writers of these stories are usually older than those of the Southern stories and, by and large, more skillful. The imprint of the *New Yorker* is on most of them; and, despite current cliché vilifications of that magazine's bloodless pattern, when they appear outside of the glossy, columned pages, extracted from the parentheses of luxurious advertisements, and are put into a book of miscellaneous modern fiction, one cannot but welcome their precision and acuity of perception.

Connecticut is the antipodes of the South. Unlike the Southern stories, many of the stories about Connecticut have no apparent action at all; no one moves, nothing changes. But the reader senses that something decisive is happening somewhere—beneath the surface of the story, in the next house, or perhaps behind his back. The earmark of this category is a vague but pervasive anxiety that threatens to become terror. Sometimes, as in Dorothy Livesay's "The Glass House," the anxiety stands by itself. Other stories at least try to account for the anxiety by providing the circumstances that are supposed to produce it. In Roger Angell's "Flight Through the Dark," a businessman returning to Connecticut from Washington contracts the contemporary ailment of anxiety—the result, obviously, of taking thought about anything, especially politics. He is met in New York by his wife, who has driven down from Greenwich. On the way home, his sense of her devotion to family and home allays his discomfort. The reader, however, is left

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with the feeling that the anxiety, like the monster in James Thurber's cartoon, still lurks just around the corner. In Shirley Jackson's "The Summer's People," an elderly couple decide to stay at their New England summer home beyond Labor Day. It is the first time any of the seasonal inhabitants has prolonged a vacation, and the townspeople respond to this intrusion by snubbing them and depriving them of necessary services and utilities. The story ends as the couple, huddled together, without light and heat, and with only a fading battery radio between them and chaos, wait for something to happen. The fear that seizes the "interloper" is a real one, but it has become a cliché in our literature. This is because it is used too often in places where, closer attention would show, it really does not belong. The fear of the writer, rather than the fear of the characters, moves us. The process that Freud called the "displacement of feeling" has been operating here and in many of the Connecticut stories where no situation adequate to the emotion turned upon it has been found.

THERE has, in fact, arisen a small school of this kind of terror-writing whose aim is to exploit the sense of danger, and to represent acts of wanton and motiveless violence. Robie Macauley and Jean Stafford are the two best writers in this genre, and their fiction is often frightening in the extreme. In Mr. Macauley's "The Invaders," a young couple on a deserted beach are met by two young men, one white and one Negro, wearing gray uniforms. The two invaders sit and watch them and refuse to go away, despite the urging of the couple. Terrified, the man and woman begin to leave, and the two strangers follow them—at a distance. Finally the man, unable to control himself, rips a plank out of a rotten stairway and smashes the invaders in the face. This is a kind of bottomless allegory, where none of the terms are public, where the "symbols," without losing the emotional aura of symbolism, have yet ceased to be symbols *of* anything. Henry James, the great influence on all these writers about Connecticut, would scorn such devices, for the meaning of James's horror stories turned upon the assumption that violence is the physical correspondent of a moral state, that fear derives from an actual and identifiable part of the personality, and further, that the image of terror—the ghost, or the beast, or the figure—has a specific moral meaning. Mr. Macauley has released himself from these conditions. Making sure we do not believe that the cause of violence is the one he gives, he asks us nonetheless to believe that a cause is there.

In Miss Stafford's "A Country Love Story," a middle-aged couple spend a winter in an old house in the country. All sorts of worries and fears vex the wife, until she fears she is going mad. She thinks that her husband is acting strangely too, as indeed he is. When the winter is over they both realize how dreadfully they have behaved. But the season of unhappiness has left its mark; she has found "that she actually did have a desire—the desire for a desire. And now she felt that she was stationary in a whirlpool." The confession strikes me as germane to most of the stories about Connecticut. Although this story resembles James's "The Beast in the Jungle," its leading character's terror is significantly different from that of James's John Marcher, who ultimately feels responsible for his own impotence. Miss Stafford attributes her character's confusion to the snow outside, or the house she lives in, or her husband's academic life.

The terror in the society of Connecticut would seem to be an intensification of the sense that the quasi-urban life of the upper middle class wants purpose. Connecticut, as it is given us, is the alternative to the Garden of Eden; it is a Hell, or more properly perhaps, a limbo, where confused people are engaged in the daily round of activities which, though painful and punishing, are merely repetitious. At any moment the façade of suburban gentility may fall away and disclose the fear that lies beneath. One has the sense that these writers are attempting to show that relations between people have been emptied of joy and real com-

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munication of feeling, and that anxiety has filled the space. What one really finds, on the other hand, is that material conditions—the topography of Connecticut, or the style of house or automobile, rather than any specific personal or social fact—are commonly called the villain. What, then, would a closer consideration of this myth about the outer circles of Hell called Connecticut signify?

THE preoccupation of these writers, in sharp contrast to the "Southern" authors, is with those amorphous feelings of exhaustion called middle age. Apparently without knowing it themselves, the characters of their stories slide into middle age at around twenty-seven, or with the first house or child, or with the intimations of mortality which come when a friend or relative dies. This is not remarkable, for while our culture has done its best to deny abrupt and distinct stages of life, it has at the same time filled us with a kind of fear of establishing ourselves in it, whether through family or property or profession; for these are the symbols of responsibility, whose price is middle age. And paying on the installment plan makes it difficult to know just when youth ends and middle age begins—a pleasant difficulty for those who cannot be happy unless they are young.

It is remarkable that one of the great themes of literature—youth, and the most profound experience of youth, sexual love—is so much neglected. Instead, there is a group of stories about old age, in which the question is how to die without disturbing anyone else—not preparing to meet one's God or resolving on courage or good sense; it is the problem of not being a problem, or a burden, that is their theme.

As for middle age in these stories, it is no longer the period of life when one settles down to the exploitation of one's abilities, nor is it marked by any rich sense of accomplishment, whether in ideas or in goods. The suburban middle-class life in them is entirely sterile, and middle age a time when, in some obscure way, one realizes that one is a failure. But like the myth of the South, is this not the uncritical acceptance of a formulated and hardened notion about society: that upper-middle-class life, because of an inherent corruption, is doomed?

This "ideal" of Connecticut grows out of the ideology of bohemia that was so attractive twenty and even ten years ago, when bohemia—its citadel in Greenwich Village—represented freedom of mind and body, a revolt from the drab conditions of bourgeois life, and, as often as not, political radicalism. It was not long before some of the intelligentsia realized that freedom was a condition of the bank account as well as of the spirit, and the disaffection with bohemia began. (The same pattern held for their defection from Stalinism, which differed from the more profound rejection of Stalinism by the intellectuals in the 30's: these "free spirits" found the discipline of commitment too much for them.) The old bohemia, that of the indigent and neglected artist, a European idea, was abandoned during the depression, but a newer bohemia came to replace it. This newer bohemia, most aptly portrayed in the *New Yorker*, was a genteel one. Life in Connecticut was a happy vision of all that Greenwich Village had failed to offer. There one might be proud of possessions, might have satisfaction in being a respected and responsible citizen, and might enjoy a delicate, pastoral-urban existence by carrying on a fairly successful, but not too strenuous, business, and by relaxing among the comforts of domestic order.

The spirit of our current short stories is evidence enough that this fashionable ideology-dream has failed also. The anxiety that pervades them suggests a specific deterioration: the diminishing gratification of what, for want of a better word, we call the career. There is a large gap in the life of Connecticut. Its men never talk about their work, nor do we ever see them at it; yet it always leaves them tired out and bored. A man becomes middle-aged, it seems, as soon as he becomes successful.

THE stories of Edward Newhouse provide excellent examples. Mr. Newhouse's re-

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cent collection, *Many Are Called,* contains three kinds of stories: the first are about the late depression and pre-war years, 1938-1941, in New York City; the second are a group of truly distinguished stories about the life of officers in the Air Force during the war; and the third are concerned with the postwar years in suburban Westchester or Connecticut. The earliest stories are filled with a wry humor, and even a sense of security, about the depression; it was with us, it was grim, and it was sure to pass away, leaving the world cleansed of hunger and permitting the possibilities for success that had been permitted before. The stories about the war show these same young men in a very happy state. For the first time in their lives they have a definite status; they live in a society of their peers where there is no worry about what to do with one's salary, a carefully limited responsibility, and no anxiety over the worthwhile engagement of one's energies and abilities. In the army, and especially among officers, men believe that the future will be the same as the past, a belief necessary to the well-being of any society.

When these men are mustered out, however, and find jobs as comfortable executives, marry intelligent women, have lovable children and convenient homes, anxiety sets in. Their jobs are not careers; their work only keeps them from their homes. And when they are at home, they are disturbed because their jobs offer no possibility of gratification. The anxiety that derives from not being able to conceive of one's job as a kind of destiny, as something which can be worked upon and created, turns to another object upon which to secure itself. This object is the family. But a second and greater wave of anxiety arises from the inevitable but scarcely conscious recognition that no personal relation can satisfy all the demands for feeling and self-esteem that any man makes. There are all the stories in which families are on the point of falling to pieces because of a small argument, in which husbands work themselves into a lather because they discover that their wives are not always in perfect command of their tempers.

The stories of pure terror, like those of Robie Macauley and Jean Stafford, logically follow the constrained ones of Mr. Newhouse. The characters in the former are conceived at the moment when their anxiety breaks loose, when they apprehend that their lives are not merely relations with families and friends, and when they apprehend further that these relations themselves are imperfect. Life then becomes a series of frightening episodes, and association with others an ineffectual safeguard against the fear of being deserted. This is why middle age is so consistently the theme of these stories; for middle age is a time when a man is supposed to steady and sustain the power of his worldly effort, and to be comforted, to some degree at least, in his accomplishment. But the irony here is that there has been no accomplishment—only a family, and that family on the point of dissolution.

THE movement from bohemia, with its excessive demand upon the "free spirit," to the world of the suburbs and a correspondingly excessive demand upon the family, indicates one fact about the relation of these writers to the culture they document. Like the Southern writers, they are ascribing their conceptions to a general symbol, in this case the suburban life. And this symbol is inadequate, too easy and at hand, too ambiguous and comprehensive, never allowing the writer to inspect the actual conditions he criticizes. Hortense Calisher's "In Greenwich There Are Many Gravelled Walks" is this sort of broadly symbolic story, although it is much more intelligent than most we have spoken of. It tells of a young man, the son of a middle-aged widow who has lived most of her life in Greenwich Village. She is an alcoholic, and the story opens with her son's taking her to a sanitorium in Connecticut at which she can temporarily regain her equilibrium. There, very neatly, the two images are related—bohemia, and the asylum from it, Suburbia. But Connecticut is like a hospital or alcoholic ward; it is only a place to which those who can no longer stand the strain of being "free" are taken; it is

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no longer even fashionable. The young man finds no comfort in this comparative geography. He visits a friend, one of those perennial, middle-aged students at Columbia, another "old bohemian" who has found his refuge in the arid rituals of marginal academicism. This student is about done for; he has gone in for homosexuality, for "Europe," and for endless albums of records which he plays continually. At his apartment the young man meets his friend's daughter (of an early and long-dead marriage), who has come to visit her father. He also meets his friend's current lover, a young homosexual. After some pretty grim repartee, the young homosexual, in a fit of depression and jealousy, flings himself out of a window. In the ensuing chaos, the young man finds himself alone with his friend's daughter. The two offspring of bohemia go to a brownstone in the Seventies where the girl finds herself, symbolically, locked out; and so they spend the night in his automobile, parked in front of his deserted apartment in Greenwich Village—an apartment which now seems to him curiously unbohemian.

> He sat thinking of how different it would be at Rye, or anywhere, with someone along who was the same age. For they were the same age, whatever that was, whatever the age was of people like them. There was nothing he would be unable to tell her.

All the images of society—Greenwich Village, Rye, or Connecticut—are rejected. The attractiveness of these worlds was of another age; they seem now corrupt and worn out. All that remains is a pure and fragile relation between two perfectly detached and declassed people. They have only each other —not even a job between them. But they do not even "have" each other sexually: they are two of the most tired young people in literature. Perhaps the direct experience of the degeneracy of bohemia and the hypocrisy of Suburbia so paralyzes them that they can only run for cover. There is a great deal of genuine pathos in this story. It seems to me, however, that Miss Calisher is creating more than pathos. There is a natural tendency to overestimate the value of any "haven"—even if that is only an automobile or an apartment—and especially when one has just escaped a particularly harrowing experience. But is this not perilously close to affirming a life no less drab and anonymously safe, no less bourgeois, the life without possessions or homes or families, as something good and full of possibilities, rather than seeing it for what it is, as a last, sad alternative after so many defeats? Indeed, more than one story this year intimates that desire, if not that choice.

JOHN STUART MILL wrote: "There is a Greek ideal of self-development, which the Platonic and Christian ideal of self-government blends with but does not supersede. It may be better to be a John Knox than an Alcibiades, but it is better to be a Pericles than either; nor would a Pericles, if we had one in these days, be without anything good which belonged to John Knox."

In this passage Mill was opposing two kinds of character. The restrictive Puritanical vision of a universal, symbolic meaning in every act, of original sin in every glance, and of the necessity of a constant, stern self-regard, was to Mill the essence of Knoxism. Opposed to Knox was Alcibiades, the mutilator of Athens' statues, the anarchic, self-expressive man, who saw reality as only a medium in which to act, and who became outraged whenever its intractability stood in his way. Pericles, however, combined the Puritan sense of reality with Alcibiades' love of the creative self—both the powers of man and his limitations.

In the American short stories we have examined, there is to be found on all sides the image of John Knox. The "Southern" writers are like Knox in that they are content to manipulate a series of symbols whose meanings everyone is sure of, and from whose force everyone is now safe (though in Knox's time, of course, they still exerted great force). The "Connecticut" writers are like Knox because they cherish a too simple set of moral rewards and punishments, yet vaguely intimate a mysterious and "hidden"

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God who may at any moment upset them all. There are no Periclean moments to speak of.

We must distrust a literature that is so uniform in its moral bias, that lacks Periclean moments. We must distrust it even if our sociologists and psychologists tell us that it gives an accurate picture of modern life. For the Periclean moment remains among our possibilities, in life as well as in literature, at various and unexpected hours, triumphant and defeated. It was there at the debates of the French Assembly during the Reign of Terror, and when Charlotte Corday killed Marat; it was there when Kirillov shot himself in a dark room, when the executioners led Joseph K. out to die, when Dr. Johnson kicked the stone, when Burke finally saw the limitations of his criticism of the French Revolution. It is the heart of what Lionel Trilling calls "the tradition of Blake, Burke, and Wordsworth," it is the abiding greatness of D. H. Lawrence and of Freud. It was there when Odysseus met Achilles in Hades, and when Walt Whitman walked through the hospital wards. And it is there in Edward Newhouse when a father bends over his six-year-old son who is beginning to be affected by the world of mass culture and says: "I'm the first line of defense . . . and all my fighting has to be done on Saturdays and Sundays. All right, then, it'll be done on Saturdays and Sundays; whatever happens, the bastards'll know they've been in a fight." It is a toughness of spirit, a resilience of mind that will criticize the world more harshly and bitterly than any of the writers I have mentioned have done, and then will work upon that world as if it were the wet, fresh clay into which God breathed. It was what William James meant when he said, "When the cup is poured off, the dregs are left behind forever, but the possibility of what is poured off is sweet enough to accept." It is a marvelous quality of literature because it is taken so directly and completely from life, and it reflects what is the essence of life. It is worth all reading, all effort, to find—and my regret is that it has been so little before us here.

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CHILDREN OF TWO HOUSES

A Story

ELAINE GOTTLIEB

WHEN we were quite young, the separation of our mother and father did not strike more deeply at first than the sense of novelty in having two homes, two families. Since we lived with our mother's family, our father's family presented a distinct contrast. We almost forgot there had been another house, a third one, a blend. And although we found the families decidedly separate, and like black and white in their separateness, we hardly wondered at it. Mother's family was one way, Daddy's another. That was all. We would never have attempted to introduce a characteristic of one family into the other—though we would have liked to extend what made us happy, to carry it from one home to another.

One of the earliest delights of our life was the celebration of Christmas. My brother and I did not know much about being Jewish, nor did we understand that there were different kinds of Jews. It never occurred to us that the celebration of the birth of Jesus was the reason for our receiving gifts, or that this was the kind of thing a Jew would be disinclined to celebrate. So far as we were concerned, Christmas meant mystery and fairy tale, Santa Claus and wish-fulfillment—the gorging oneself on candy and tangerines. It meant pleasure, the family together, that is, our father's family, and friends coming in, and a delicious dinner afterwards.

We did not scan the holiday with the dejected eye of our maternal grandmother. Our mother's family was, of course, Orthodox, our father's family Reform. It was not until we moved to the maternal homestead that we became aware of the innumerable remarks directed against Reform Jews by our grandmother. Dissension undoubtedly preceded the permission we received to spend Christmas at the other house.

We lived in a part of Brooklyn which at that time looked like a small town or a suburb. Both houses were large, wooden, with great gardens in which flowers, trees, shrubs, and even vegetables were grown. Both houses were an equal distance, about two blocks, from the bay bordering the Narrows, and they were about four streets away from each other. On one block we had friends who were the children of Orthodox parents, on the other, those who were the children of Reform parents. On Christmas day I always ran out to compare dolls with the little girls on the paternal block. This was unheard of on the maternal block.

My maternal grandmother and grandfather took their religion seriously. It was a daily practice of penance, supplication, regret, and hope. My grandfather seemed to be on intimate terms with God. I recall him often in that bent attitude of prayer, turned away from us, his face to the wall, the sideboard, making a long low speech that we could not understand. "What is he saying?" I once asked our mother, tormented. "He's asking God to make you good children," she said.

Our maternal grandmother and grandfather were convinced we would become *goyim*. Their large family, our many aunts and uncles—at that time fairly young and unmarried—regarded us alternately with derision and disdain. Derision was their mode of treating children. They expected us to

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THIS is the first story by ELAINE GOTTLIEB to appear in COMMENTARY. She has published a novel, *Darkling* (1947), and stories in *Kenyon Review* and *New Directions*, and is now at work on a second novel, to be published next fall by the Noonday Press. She received her bachelor's degree from New York University and has also attended Columbia University.

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do funny things, ridiculous things—but most of all they were sure we were always going to do things wrong. Disdain was for our Reform affiliations.

SINCE we were, however, captives in Orthodox territory, we began to get an Orthodox education. This was undertaken with some enthusiasm by our grandparents, and we were rather grateful to be receiving so much attention. I remember sitting in the huge kitchen, at the large round table, beside a sunny window. It was like a game—my little brother put a *yarmelke* on his curly hair and he and I repeated, sound for sound, the incomprehensible prayers for bread, for fruit, for wine, for meat; prayers of praise, of thanks, prayers for occasions. We were proud of our phonetic accomplishment, and rattled off the sounds smartly whenever they were called for . . . but although we knew the place for each prayer, we could never have translated the words.

We learned all the prohibitions. Knowing them, we were "in the know" with God. We speculated on the possibilities of getting very close to God. My brother said he would become a rabbi; that was the way. We never dared speak the name of God aloud, except in prayer. Hearing anyone else say it, we glanced fearfully at the sky, to see if it would fall. If it didn't fall now, it would, later. Sins would be punished. We had been informed. We knew also that bread was holy; one always ate it, never dropped it. If it was dropped, it was immediately retrieved and kissed—the same respect went only to prayer books. We knew too that one never confused the meat silverware with that used when there was milk. And we knew all about the things one must not do on Saturday.

So cocksure did we become, in fact, of the way to do things, that we began to criticize the aunts and uncles for any infractions. We watched, rather, we spied, to see that the telephone was not used on Saturdays. If there was a telephone call, and someone answered, we were perturbed lest this be as much a sin as having made the call. The telephone then seemed an evil thing, as much to be feared as the eye of God. As for the stove—we worried lest the flame left burning there by our grandmother, since Friday, might go out and leave us without the possibility of a Saturday meal. On the rare occasions when it did go out, my brother or myself was called upon to do the relighting, in the belief perhaps that we were not as Orthodox as they, or that children had far more time to work off their sins than adults.

Once, seeing a child across the street drawing a picture in chalk on the street on a Saturday, we pushed the curtain aside and watched, horror-stricken. We rushed out and called, "That's a sin! Don't you know it?" The child only looked at us with that particularly blank look children have when what is being said to them has nothing at all to do with what they are thinking. Nor did any other child, somewhat less Orthodox than we, worry when we said that it was not right to go to movies, to carry money to movies on Saturday.

Despite the depth of our indoctrination in things Jewish—at one time a shy young man with a smooth complexion taught us Hebrew—we seemed to forget all Orthodox attachments on Sundays when we went to visit our father's family. Early Sunday mornings, we went to the Temple Sunday school. It was a happy, comradely Sunday school. We participated in plays, bazaars, banquets, parties. Occasionally, when we attended the adult Temple services, the contrast with the Synagogue was tremendous.

Our maternal grandmother scoffed at the Temple, saying that it was simply a church: didn't they have an organ, and even a choir? (Playing an instrument was sinful.) She ridiculed the women who, instead of the men, wore hats. But I did not tell her that I understood the hymns I sang there, and the prayers too. At the Synagogue I understood nothing. Perhaps those services were understood only by the rabbi, or a few contemporaries of my grandmother, who, in the ladies' balcony, beat their breasts, wept, swayed, occasionally fainted. In the Synagogue, or rather in the ladies' balcony (I was not al-

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lowed to sit with my brother and the men), there was an overpowering smell of emotion. One was struck by it, opening the door. It stood there ready to choke one. I never entered the Synagogue without dread, without a feeling that terrible things were being observed, would happen, had happened. Down below, in the persons of the men, shawl-draped, hooded, swaying, nodding with prayer, there seemed an irremediable grief. I felt God in the Synagogue, I saw him afire in stained glass windows, I felt him watching, warning. I felt conscience, guilt. I felt, though I could not have named it then, Sex.

In the Temple, fewer demands were made upon my responses. If I remembered relatives who had died, if I was made to remember them, I did not have to feel the desperate deprivation, the indissoluble blood bond, spirit bond wrung from me. In the Temple I existed, blissfully anonymous, a child of God, one of the many, gently led.

Once or twice we attended the Orthodox Sunday school, but I could not endure it. We did not have a special set of schoolrooms —there were not even that many children— "serious" ones went to the Yeshiva. There were very few of us; I suppose because we were so young. All I remember of the children there is a distaste for a tall boy who kept insisting that men were superior to women. "Even God," he declared, "is a man."

SUNDAY dinners at my father's house were a delight. The food was marvelous, the talk spirited, the laughter constant. There was a playroom for us upstairs, with an electric train, a doll house, many exciting things. In the other house, we had no special place to play but always had to rummage about discovering secrets in the rooms of our aunts and uncles, in the attic, in the living room. We definitely enjoyed our father's family more than the other. We looked forward to the weekly visit as though it were a party. And there usually was a treat for us, of some kind or another—candy, ice cream, sea food, chocolate cake, or Coney Island. But the biggest treat was Christmas.

In the third-floor room where we slept, close to the roof, on Christmas Eve, we could scarcely be still, thinking of the sleigh that would soon traverse the sky. "I heard him," my brother would say, "I heard his bells," or, going to the window, he would announce, "I think I saw him." I, in a more literal stage than my brother, would listen and hear no one, but I believed and envied him—would look and see nothing, and would wonder why it was only my brother to whom such visitations came. Far below me, the empty garden glistened in moonlight. If there was snow on the ground, it was silvery, still, an enchanted silence, telling me nothing.

But in the morning, enchantment stirred. We awoke early, but others had been up before us. It was our grandfather, white-haired and pink-cheeked, that agile man who used to swim in winter waters for the sport—our little plump light-footed grandfather with his smile and his gay eyes, looking like Santa himself, who rose earliest, started the furnace, and set the red-glowing electric heater in the bathroom so that we might dress there. To dress in front of the rosy heater was in itself a thrill—to be able to escape the icy house which warmed, as such houses, at such time, slowly. Then we would become aware of the smells arriving like messengers from the kitchen. Articulate messengers they were, describing our grandmother and aunts already there preparing a breakfast, a huge breakfast, a festive breakfast, sweet, steaming, sharp, buttery. All of us would sit down to it laughing, joking—the two aunts, Grandmother, Grandfather, Father, Uncle—and eat and eat. We had bacon, or sausages, or both, and pancakes or waffles, or both, and cocoa while they had coffee—and then when we were all quite warmed and melted, almost dozing with delight, we, the first edge taken off our anticipation, were allowed in the living room.

There, full glory burst upon us. The tree, trimmed by Santa and his little men, of course, twinkled like fairyland itself. Such a delicate tremble it had—of silver foil and tinkly bells, as we walked toward it, to gaze at the colored lights and colored balls and streamers and the necklaces of bright things

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and candy canes. And sometimes gifts were hung upon it, but more often, they were piled beneath. And it smelled sweet, strong, smelled of the woods and freshness and a journey through the north, a long masculine journey, a strong man carrying it, depositing it, pungent, in our grandmother's living room.

"WILL it have a star on top?" asked our maternal grandmother, accusingly, the day before one Christmas, when we told her we expected a tree. A star, our grandmother assured us, was a symbol of Jesus.

At the silvery star crowning the tree, we gazed, hardly daring to lift our eyes to it, knowing what we knew, expecting God to find out any minute. But as we gazed, the star grew smaller, seemed more finite, finally receded into the mesh of ornament, and we forgot it. If only, we thought, the other family could see how beautiful the tree looked! What a joy Christmas was! How nice it would have been to have Christmas in both houses! Before going to our father's house the day before, my brother and I had plotted. We had pooled our savings, two magnificent dollars. We made a trip to the five-and-ten. Then before leaving for our father's house, we had hung our stocking at the fireplace in our mother's house. "Santa doesn't come here," our mother had told us. "Oh," we, wiser, prevailing, insisted, "but he will, this time."

In our father's house, the stockings were full of the expected candies, tangerines, apples, small toys. Our aunts and grandmother and grandfather and uncle and father were very much surprised, but nonetheless appreciative of the gifts we had found for them at the five-and-ten. We knew that gifts could come from individuals as well as from Santa—particularly when adults were the ones to receive them. Our younger aunt immediately found a place in the kitchen in which to hang the mirror-calendar. Our older aunt put her handkerchief in her pocket. Our grandmother took the iridescent glass vase and placed it near a window, in preparation for the first flower that would come to it. Our uncle said he always wanted such a tie rack. Our father kissed us and wrote his name in the diary. Our grandfather, displaying it proudly, said this was the finest shaving mug he had ever had.

SUCCESSFUL, we returned towards dinner time to the other house. Excitedly depositing our quarry on the nearest couch, we ran to the fireplace. Our mother had greeted us. She tried to hide the deflated stockings. Nothing had happened to them! "You see," explained our mother gently, to our dismayed faces, "Santa really doesn't come here." Our grandmother, disapproving, glowering, hovered near, but said nothing. We took the stockings upstairs with our packages, and showed our gifts to our mother. But before dinner we stole downstairs again to make a small deposit before each plate.

We could scarcely wait to see their faces, to see how they would react, finding that they had not been forgotten, were included in the holiday. We wanted to see them smile with pleasure. Perhaps we even thought they might have been waiting to give something to us too.

All of us entered together. After our grandfather prayed, everyone was seated. Then they saw the packages.

"What's this?" asked our eldest uncle, coldly.

An aunt lifted her package disconsolately.

Another uncle glanced at his with a kind of disgust.

Then one aunt opened hers. The rest opened theirs. Then—silence.

"What's it for?" asked the eldest uncle, harshly.

"Christmas," we said, in pale tones.

They pushed the presents away, contaminated. One aunt half-heartedly remarked that her napkin ring was pretty. They did not glance at the packages again. After the meal they walked away without acknowledging that there was anything beside their plates. We thought perhaps we should take them back. But we were hurried to bed.

We almost wept. It was hard not to weep. We wanted to ask a question, but we knew

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no one would answer it. Bitterly, we went upstairs. Detaining our mother, who leaned over to kiss us, we whispered, "Was it a sin?"

"They don't like to receive Christmas gifts here," she said. "They don't like to be reminded of Christmas. It is a sin to them."

Trembling, we said we didn't know. Our mother said it was all right and told us to go to sleep, and then left.

"They should have said: Thank you!" my brother whispered loudly. "They should have thanked us!"

"I hate them!" I said. "We'll go down there in the morning and take all those presents back. We'll take them away and give them to the others. That's what we'll do!"

But the next morning the presents were not there. Neither in the dining room nor the kitchen could we find them.

"Maybe they threw them out!" my brother said. We looked at each other, flushed with anger.

But we saw the iridescent vase we had given our grandmother on a window sill—and there was a flower in it. And upstairs we saw that our uncle's tie racks were already in use. And our youngest aunt was wearing the barrette we gave her for her hair. Yet no one signaled to us. No one, lifting or touching the contraband gifts, signaled recognition. They never spoke of having received anything. They never mentioned that it had happened.

Nor did we dare remind them.

CENTRAL PARK

HOWARD NEMEROV

The broad field darkens, but, still moving round
So that they seem to hover off the ground,
Children are following a shadowy ball;
Shrill, as of birds, their high voices sound.

The pale December sky at darkfall seems
A lake of ice, and frozen there the gleams
Of the gaunt street lamps and the young cold cries,
The ball falling in the slow distance of dreams.

Football, long falling in the winter sky,
The cold climate of a child's eye
Had kept you at the height so long a time;
His ear had kept the waiting player's cry,

That after years, coming that way then,
He might be pity's witness among men
Who hear those cries across the darkening field,
And see the shadow children home again.

Howard Nemerov is the author of several books, among them *Guide to the Ruins* (1950), a volume of poems. This is his third appearance in our pages.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

NEW DEAL WAKE: BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

". . . End of the Wonderful One-Hoss Shay"?

HAMLEN HUNT

THE young couple from Worcester walked down to the end of a corridor in the Boston Hotel Statler. Half a dozen Massachusetts Democrats high in the party sat and listened to the election returns. Bob Coles, explained beforehand as a rich Jew who was active in state politics, came out of the bathroom where he had been taking a shower. He greeted the couple, who had campaigned hard in Worcester, and who were friends of somebody, without really paying attention.

"Get you something?" he said.

Soon after nine o'clock on the evening of November 4 the American people in their millions became suddenly aware that the scepter was passing from hands that had held it for twenty years, and even on the heirs-apparent there descended something of a feeling of awe and of thoughtful surmise. As for the members of the immediate family, what thoughts came to them, as they huddled in little broken circles in front of the radio and realized that F.D.R.'s New Deal coalition had fallen apart? One of COMMENTARY's short story writers, who has sent us fictional renderings of various communal situations in the Boston area, mailed this to us a few days after the landslide, piecing out some clues which she noted in the vicinity with the usual latitude permitted to the imaginative intuition. It is, accordingly, hardly necessary for us to mention that any resemblance between the characters in this sketch and any real persons, living or dead, represents a coincidence for which neither the writer who wrote it nor this magazine is responsible. HAMLEN HUNT's work has appeared in many periodicals, serious and "popular"; her last contribution to COMMENTARY was "Now They Bring the Matches!" in the August 1951 issue.

Mr. Coles wore a double-breasted dark blue suit. You can't be a Democratic "pol" unless you go double-breasted, it appeared, as everyone else wore a suit cut the same way, some dark blue, others in brown or dark checked material. Mr. Coles looked extremely neat, clean, and shaved. He was pale as he greeted the few people who came in. There must have been others, earlier, because used glasses and open bottles and melting ice stood around on tables. The evening already seemed old.

He went over to a briefcase and took out three bottles of V.O. Then he sat down on the sofa facing the small radio. It was about ten-thirty and a few scattered returns were coming in. Mr. Coles grew paler and said, "I tell you, it's a landslide. You're going to see such a fascist government in this country like you never heard of. It can't happen here! I'm telling you!"

He seemed very distressed, and in a personal way. The other politicians were much more cheerful, and were already making jokes about their defeat. An Irish wake is often merry.

"It's been a good twenty years," they said to each other, jovially, but nobody was drinking. The V.O. stayed where it was. They all stared at the radio as though it were television. The television outfit stood at one side and nobody thought of turning it on.

A POL named Johnny McBride entered, and the party greeted him, and he greeted the bewildered young couple from Worcester warmly, perhaps on principle, but he made it seem personal. He, too, was convinced of defeat, and, while philosophical

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about you can't win all the time, still was bitter. He and Mr. Riordan, who was a Commissioner in charge of some branch of Highway Funds—a tall, stout, red-faced man in a tan double-breasted suit—were arguing with each other about some key state positions which they felt were already lost to the Democrats, too. Mr. McBride blamed it on the top local Democratic candidate, a man named Dineen. He knew him well, as he had been his aide for years, and was also on the State Council with him.

"That sonovabitch," said McBride. "Pardon me, ladies. That sonovabitch, Dineen, I hope he goes down, too. They're all going down, I tell you, so let him go with them. Oh, I'm goin' down, too. What did Dineen ever do for the party? It was all for Dineen. What did he do for Stevenson in Massachusetts?"

Riordan said, "Dineen's okay. He did plenty."

"What?"

"He gave five thousand dollars, personally," Riordan said.

"Who paid for Harry's trip to Massachusetts?" McBride said.

"I did," Bob Coles said, absently. "But Dineen kicked in two thousand. He's not so bad."

Riordan said contentiously, "What did Stevenson do for Dineen, if it comes to that? He came and put his arm around young Riley's shoulders, sure, and turned his back on Dineen, right there on the platform."

"Dineen's a sonovabitch and I know," McBride said.

The time went by, slowly. The hotel was very quiet. The returns came in. Bob Coles sat silent, and someone asked someone else, "How much is Bob out? Forty grand?"

Bob Coles answered for himself. He had pencil and paper in hand. "Around twenty-three so far," he said, it seemed to be in personal wagers which he lost, state by state. He sat near the telephone and as it rang, not very often, he answered it saying, "City morgue here."

Mr. McBride, a member of the State Council, kept talking. He ordered a bottle of light rum and when it came, poured himself a drink. From time to time he took issue with the commentators announcing the returns. Otherwise, he kept up a running commentary—the stream-of-consciousness monologue that is one of the hallmarks of the true Irish pol.

"Listen, I'm going to get a son tonight," he said. "I just left my wife up at Cardinal O'Connell House on my way in here. Adlai's a hell of a name, but Ike McBride sounds worse."

An elderly man with rough white hair and dark eyes set in somewhat unevenly, looking tired and a little shabby, came in. He was a judge with an Armenian name.

"We had a great twenty years," he said.

"Hell," said McBride. "We thought it was Civil Service. I told them in Chicago. I told you then, too—" He directed this to Riordan, who had also been in Chicago. Riordan got up and poured himself some whiskey. "I said it wouldn't work. How in hell can you run a man that don't even want to run and says so, for Christ's sake? Listen, this job, it ain't being president of the Teamsters' Union, you know. It ain't being head of the Truckmens' Local. What did Stevenson do? He stood on the Cardinal's front doorstep where everybody could see him, and said he wouldn't send an envoy to the Vatican. Right there, he lost the Catholics."

"There goes Florida," someone said. "Final returns."

"Pensioners!" said Bob Coles.

"Even the Negroes didn't vote for him," McBride went on, in a lower voice, as he summed up the causes for defeat. "You take care of them. You feed them. They get fat. And they don't even vote for you. They'll find out!"

Nobody was sparing anybody's sensibilities tonight. There was no care taken for your neighbor's race, religion, or color, and it was very relaxing. The men here were mostly Irish or Jewish. They loathed Senator McCarthy, perhaps as a renegade, and they hated the Italians, some of whom were winning minor offices, and who were also Catholics. They called them by the old name of Wop.

"Let them Wops go back to their lousy pushcarts," McBride said, with real bitterness now apparent in his voice. "Every pushcart on the streets had a lousy Republican sign on it today. Let them go back and get out the monkey and the tin cup. They'll need it. Jesus!"

"Even the Wops were against us," he said, when Rhode Island was lost.

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At one point he interrupted himself. "I hear now's the time to show class," he said. "When you're losing."

Then he went on. "Who was there wasn't against us? The Catholics, the Wops, the Negroes, the Republicans. Who did we have left, for Christ's sake? The laundrymen! Call Chinatown and see how we're doing there!"

AGAIN he turned to Riordan, whose face was slowly getting redder. "I told you in Chicago. This fellow wants to talk sense to the people, wants everything on a high plane, no crude pols like us. Wants them fellows that cuts their own hair. Okay. He's got them."

The young wife from Worcester couldn't stand it any longer. "But who else *was* there?" she said.

McBride looked as though he didn't understand the question. Then, with conscious restraint, he said, "Barkley. We'd have walked in with Barkley. It would have been a breeze. Love! You know anybody's against love? Everybody wants a piece of it! Take down any history book off any library shelf—you ever hear of anybody being against a great lover? He could have toured the country and taken his peach with him, and we'd be in tonight."

"There goes Illinois," somebody said. "He isn't even going to carry his own state!"

"Oh, my God!" said somebody.

"I like that Barkley," Riordan said. "He was here, and I asked him what he'd have and he said, 'Hell, I'm from Kentucky, what do you think I'll have?' and I filled his glass right to the top with Bourbon."

More returns came in and McBride got up in disgust and said, "We lost New York, and Illinois. How's the State Council doing? Did I even get in the phone booth?"

But things weren't settled in Massachusetts yet. The Republican Senator should have been ahead, with the rest of his party, but Riley, the Democrat, was still in the lead.

"His family spent plenty on his campaign," somebody said. "All those tea parties. The Archbishop himself went out and campaigned for him, said to vote Riley. His old man's built a couple Catholic hospitals already, and they say the Rileys can't spend the income, let alone the billions they have."

Riordan got up and went to the phone. He called an old friend, a New York city pol, who was spending the evening at the Manhattan Club. "How's it going?" he asked.

"Ask him what time the Mass is," Bob Coles said.

The Judge sat, silent and thoughtful, his bristling gray beard rough over his heavy face. All these men were broad and solid and energetic, whether short or tall, the kind of men who can stay up all night, night after night, and work all day, stopping for a shower and a quick nap and a few drinks, and going right on. Old-time pols. They remembered everybody's name.

"Dineen's going down," McBride said with satisfaction as some more scattered Massachusetts returns came in. "I'm glad, even if it means Carter. I hate that Carter, too. Hell, that man's got a stoopéd back." The young man from Worcester thought he meant stupid, but it was explained. "And you know why it's stoopéd? From carrying kerosene to burn down Catholic churches! He's been at it since infancy and he's all bent over."

He got up and, stooping and squatting, as though carrying a five-gallon can of kerosene in each hand, walked across the room.

"Burning down Catholic churches," he said.

Even the Irish weren't sticking together in this election. Things were breaking up. There were curses whenever Jenner or the Republican McCarthy was mentioned on the radio.

"Who didn't he have with him, for Christ's sake, excuse me?" McBride said passionately. "He didn't have the low pols and the ward men going around putting up posters, like we always did before. No. He was going to campaign on a high level!" He drank some rum. "Who did he have? He had the laundrymen, and the stay-awayers, and the ADA-ers, and Stevenson's vomiteers, that's who he had, and that's all."

TWO hours had gone by, quietly. Someone turned on television and a commentator read from sheets of paper handed to him, but the results were the same as those that had been coming over the radio.

Bob Coles and the Judge got up, put on hats.

"Where to?" McBride asked.

"We're going to take a walk up to the *Times Herald* office," they said. "See how it looks up there."

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McBride seemed angry. "Sit down," he said. "Stay away from there! That building ought to be taken down, brick by brick. People like you, names like yours, couldn't even buy the *Times Herald*, let alone work for it, twenty years ago. Sit down."

They sat down, dispiritedly.

"High-type men the General's got," somebody said, disgusted. "Nixon. Jenner. That McCarthy!"

"Riley's still ahead," somebody said, but nobody cheered up much.

"Hoover," McBride said, in a thoughtful voice. "My old man used to work for a wool-finishing company, down around South Station." He explained to the Worcester couple, "I'm one of ten, and my old man worked at this place and when Hoover came to Boston the men were told to go out and cheer. They wanted the Irish to stand around and cheer Hoover, for God's sake, and they got sixty-five cents for supper and standing around two-three hours outside South Station, waiting for Hoover. My old man didn't do it, and the next day, he was fired."

A man over in the corner spoke up, nodding. "My old man was fired the same way," he said.

Riordan continued cheerful, perhaps because, as one of his friends suggested, he had put away enough to take it easy for twenty years. "What did he leave?" McBride agreed. "Show me even the banister in any decent house in Boston with a morsel of dust left on it, once the likes of him get their big foot in the door." Riordan took this as a compliment, or seemed to.

He said, "Well, now we can loaf awhile. Four years from now, we'll be back." He reasoned, "Who heard of Stevenson, anyway? You buy soup, you buy Campbell's, or some brand you never heard of? Everybody knew the General."

"Did Mamie win for Ike?" somebody asked. "Was that love?"

McBride laughed at getting back his own words. "Maybe Ike started the rumor about how the gals all go for him himself," he said. "I wouldn't put it past him, at that. Christ, I told them, tie Stevenson up with some woman, even if it's only a waitress at the Palmer House."

Bob Coles was sitting by the radio, crying quietly. It was a personal matter with him, he wasn't an Irish pol, his reactions differed from theirs.

"There goes New York," McBride said. "I wonder did we carry East Derry, New Jersey?"

Mr. Riordan walked down the hall with the quiet young couple from Worcester, who had to go and catch the last bus out of Park Square. He stood with them while they waited for the elevator.

"What kind of soup would *you* buy?" he asked.

"Riordan's!" they responded, and he laughed and said, "Let them take the responsibility awhile. We'll be back in forty years!"

They assumed he meant four, but the elevator came and they never found out.

THURSDAY morning, the young man from Worcester, reading the paper at breakfast, saw that Dineen had indeed gone down, and the man with the stoopéd back had won the key Democratic position in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. McBride himself had been one of the few Democrats to make the grade. He was still on the Council, elected by a large majority.

But there was a small news item, boxed, that made the young man call over to his wife.

"What do you think McBride named his son?" he asked. "He did get a son that night." He read the clipping to her:

JOHNNY NAMES BOY FOR DINEEN

The baby boy who was born to Mrs. John McBride of South Boston while her husband was counting the votes that made him the only South Boston member of the State Council, will be named Joseph Luke and Party Leader Joseph Luke Dineen will serve as his godfather, Councillor McBride announced yesterday.

He thinks that, taking one thing with another, young Joseph Luke McBride will grow up to be a good Democrat.

"He could just as well have named him for the winner," the young man remarked to his wife, but she still looked as if she found politics bewildering.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

MAN, THE MASTER OF ALL CREATED WORLDS

HAYIM BEN ISAAC

PROBABLY as a result of renewed interest in the work of Martin Buber, the impression has spread that Hasidism is the only modern expression of Jewish mysticism. That this is not so is proved by the many works of mystical exegesis issued by the Mitnagdim, the rabbinic critics of Hasidism. They, following the lead of the great Gaon of Vilna, saw Hasidism as a threat because of its tendency to shift the emphasis from Talmudic learning to religious experience of a more direct nature. This appeared to mean a weakening of the binding power of rabbinic law, which for the Mitnagdim was synonymous with Judaism. But because they also understood that Hasidism's main stress was mystical, they saw that it would have to be met on that level as well as in the field of law.

Thus a number of works challenging Hasidism were written under the inspiration of the Lurian Cabala. Their purpose was to endow the everyday observance of rabbinic law with mystical depth. Avoiding any implication that would read magical powers into rabbinic practice, they succeeded, nevertheless, in finding a previously unsuspected religious significance in the performance of the most insignificant-seeming precepts. These discoveries of meaning had an enormous influence both on the Mitnagdim and the Hasidim. As a matter of fact, they saved the latter for historic Judaism.

THE most interesting among these Mitnagdic adventures in mysticism is, perhaps, Rabbi Hayim ben Isaac of Volozhin's *Nefesh Hachayim* ("The Breath of Life"). R. Hayim was born in 1749 and died in 1821. His book was published posthumously by his son in 1824 and, gaining immediate recognition, was reprinted many times after that. *Nefesh Hachayim* was read not only in the yeshiva of Volozhin, founded by R. Hayim himself, but in all the other Mitnagdic yeshivas throughout Eastern Europe.

Its success was due in part to the fame of its author. The most brilliant of the students of the Gaon of Vilna, R. Hayim inherited something of his eminence in the field of Talmudic learning and, like the Gaon, was called upon to decide many difficult Talmudic problems. But a good deal more than its author's reputation was involved in the success of *Nefesh Hachayim*.

The doctrine the book expounded was a mystical humanism that gave the everyday precepts of rabbinic law cosmic proportions. R. Hayim saw man as the delegated master not only of this world and the powers in it, but also of the celestial worlds that stand above him. Every human act corresponds symbolically to realities of which man is not aware but upon which he has effect nevertheless. This symbolic correspondence applies to every part of his body and to each of his faculties. Fulfillment of the precepts connected with the various parts of the body and the different faculties creates powers and realities in all the celestial worlds that are dependent on, and correspond to, the acts of man. Conversely, non-fulfillment of these precepts, or wrongdoing itself, destroys powers and realities already existing in the higher worlds. This is how the deeds of a Jew affect not only himself and his own spiritual welfare, but divine worlds dependent on his acts.

I GIVE below a translation of the first three chapters of *Nefesh Hachayim*, whose central idea, developed later in considerable detail but never altered, is to be found here in paradigmatic form: namely, that man controls all the worlds of creation. As is usual with rabbinic authors, this idea is developed through an interpretation of accepted material—in this case the verse in Genesis about man's having been created in the image of God. This convinces R. Hayim that his own ideas are not original, and therefore that they are not specious; furthermore, it guarantees that his humanism is not at the expense of God. Man's control of the higher worlds is owed to the divine image in him that makes him what he is; his power

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derives from God. Accordingly, God's primacy is maintained despite the central position given to man.

That R. Hayim casts his thought in the form of a commentary on Scriptural and rabbinic sources may face the modern reader with difficulties, but it should be kept in mind that it was only in this way that the rabbinic writers were able to give the tradition a unity that it otherwise lacked.—MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD.

I

IT IS written: "So *Elohim* created the man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him" (Gen. 1:27). Similarly, it is also written: ". . . for in the image of *Elohim* made he man" (Gen. 9:6). Now the essential profundity of this matter of "image" is among the most sublime things in the world and contains within itself most of the inner secrets of the Zohar. Here, however, we shall speak of the word "image" after the fashion of the first simple commentators of the verse, "We will make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), may their memory be a blessing.

Now the point is that the words "image" and "likeness" are not to be taken literally, since it is written explicitly: "What likeness can you compare unto Him?" (Isa. 40:18). It means, rather, some similarity in one aspect only, as in the verse: "I am like a pelican of the wilderness" (Ps. 102:7). There the meaning of the Psalmist is not that he has the wings and the beak of a pelican or that his shape has assumed that of a bird, but rather that in his activities at the moment, that of constant wandering, he resembles the pelican, which is a lonely bird flying from place to place. Such is the interpretation according to the first simple commentators, may their memory be a blessing. And similar is the case of the word "image," for its similarity, too, is only in one aspect.

II

IT IS, however, necessary to understand why Scripture writes "in the image of *Elohim*" rather than in the image of some other name of God. The reason for this is that the name *Elohim* denotes that His Blessed Name is Master of All Powers. He is called Master of All Powers because His traits are not like the traits of a creature of flesh and blood. For when a man wishes to build a wooden building he does not create the wood by his own power but takes wood that has already been created and arranges it in the form of a building. And when, after having done this, he removes his power from it, the building will nevertheless still remain standing. But in the case of His Blessed Name it is entirely different. Just as at the time of the original creation of all the worlds, which He created and founded *ex nihilo*, by means of His power, so even now, every day and every actual second, their power of existence, regularity, and persistence depends exclusively upon being permeated every second, voluntarily, with the illumination of new light by His Blessed Name. And should the Blessed One withhold from them the power of His influence for even one second, that very second they would all vanish into void and nothingness. This is what the men of the Great Synagogue had in mind when they wrote in the liturgy: "Who in His goodness reneweth the works of creation every day, continually." The meaning of "continually" is literal: every instant and moment. Their proof for this is explicit in Scripture: "To Him who *maketh* great lights" (Ps. 136:7). It does not say "made" but "maketh."

This is the reason that His Blessed Name is *Elohim*, Master of All Powers. Every individual power that is to be found in any of the worlds is, each one, of His Blessed Name, the Master of all of them, who imparts their force and energy to them at all times and in whose hands it is to change and arrange them as He wishes.

III

SIMILAR is the thought implied in the comparison of "image." The Blessed One created man and gave him dominion over myriads of powers and numberless worlds. He gave it into the hands of man to guide and direct these powers by means of the smallest details of his conduct: deeds, words, and thoughts. This direction may be good or, Heaven forbid, the opposite. By means of deeds, words, and thoughts that are good, he sustains and imparts strength to many powers and sacred, higher worlds. To these he adds sancity and light, as it is written in Scripture: "And I have put my words in thy mouth . . . to plant the heavens and

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lay the foundations of the earth" (Isa. 51:16). Further, as the Sages write: "R. Eliezer said in the name of R. Hanina: Sages increase peace in the world, as it is written, 'And all thy sons (*banayich*) shall be instructed of the Lord' (Isa. 54:13). Do not read *banayich* (sons) but *bonayich* (builders)." The meaning of this is that it is they who order the higher worlds as a builder orders his building. These righteous people thus give the higher worlds great strength. On the other hand, Heaven forbid, by means of deeds, words, or thoughts that are not good, man destroys many powers and sacred, higher worlds without end and limit, as it is written in Scripture: "Thy destroyers and Thy wasters shall go forth from Thee" (Isa. 49:17). Or, at the very least, he darkens and diminishes their light and sanctity, Heaven forbid, and adds this strength to the Dwellings of Uncleanliness.

This, then, is the explanation of the verse: "And *Elohim* created man in his own image; in the image of *Elohim* created He him" (Gen. 1:27). That is, just as He, Blessed be His Name, is *Elohim,* Master of all the powers that exist in all worlds, arranging and ordering them every moment according to His will, so has His blessed will made man the ruler over myriads of powers and worlds by means of each of his smallest actions—in all of his concerns, at every single moment, according to the higher source of these actions, words, or thoughts, as though he were the master of these powers. This is the meaning of the Sages when they write: "R. Azariah said in the name of R. Judah the son of R. Simon: When Israel do the will of the Omnipresent they add strength to the Divine Power, as it is written: 'We shall add strength to Elohim' (Ps. 60:14); but when Israel fail to do the will of the Omnipresent they weaken, as it were, a great Power above, as it is written: 'Thou hast weakened the Rock that begat thee' (Deut. 32:18)." This thought also recurs in the Zohar very frequently; such as: "The sins of man cause imperfections above," and conversely. Similarly, in the Zohar's interpretation of the verse: "And it fell upon a day, that the sons of God came to present themselves (literally: to stand upon) before the Lord" (Job 1:6). The meaning of this is that in standing upon the deeds of Israel they indeed stand upon the Holy One, Blessed Be He. For when Israel does not do the will of the Omnipresent they fatigue, as it were, the powers of the Holy One, Blessed Be He; and when they do worthy deeds they give strength and power to the Holy One, Blessed Be He. Therefore is it written: " 'Give strength unto God.' Wherewith? With worthy deeds."

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ON THE HORIZON

HENRY ADAMS' SKEPTIC FAITH IN DEMOCRACY

What If It Should Succeed . . . !

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

HENRY ADAMS, who made a philosophy and a career out of his self-publicized failure, was descended from the most illustrious family of "failures" America has ever produced. His great-grandfather, John Adams, the first vice-president and the second president of the United States, spent his life bitterly lamenting the failure of his principles, his party, and his popularity. His grandfather, John Quincy Adams, succeeded, in his turn, to the presidency, but shared with John Adams the mortification of not being reelected for a second term, as he also shared with him an introspective, self-critical, and moralistic cast of mind. Henry's father, Charles Francis Adams, had the important diplomatic position of minister to Great Britain, but at the unfortunate time of the American Civil War, when British high society and officialdom were overwhelmingly partial to the South, and when intrigue seemed to prevail over principle. Henry Adams could thus boast a long and respectable education in failure.

The failure, however, was not so much one of men, as of men in time. The Adamses, Henry noted in his *Education*, were children of the 17th and 18th centuries who unexpectedly found themselves in a 19th century that was prematurely taking on the color of the 20th. They were of the 17th century in the Cromwellian moral universe which they inhabited, a universe of permanent moral revolution: "Resistance to something was the law of New England nature; the boy [Henry Adams] looked out on the world with the instinct of resistance; for numberless generations his predecessors had viewed the world chiefly as a thing to be reformed, filled with evil forces to be abolished, and they saw no reason to suppose that they had wholly succeeded in the abolition; the duty was unchanged." And they were men of the 18th century in the aristocratic political system which they aspired to govern, a system aristocratic not by virtue of some blind, mechanical principle of patrimony—such was the England of the 18th century, which the Americans had repudiated by the desperate measure of revolution—but by that natural instinct which supposedly induced society to surrender itself to the care of its betters. The rapid decline in the political fortunes of the Adamses,

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SCION of the presidential Founding Fathers, Henry Adams himself had grave doubts about the future of democracy as he observed its operations in the America of his time, and he expressed his forebodings in one of the most influential of American autobiographies, *The Education of Henry Adams*, published after his death in 1918. Earlier, Adams had set forth his view of the American political system in a novel, *Democracy*, first published anonymously in 1880 and recently republished (Farrar, Straus, and Young, 246 pp., $3.50). GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB here discusses the subtleties and contradictions of Adams's thinking as they are revealed in this curious work of fiction. Miss Himmelfarb, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, is the editor of *Essays on Freedom and Power*, a selection from the work of Lord Acton, the 19th-century English historian, and the author of *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics*, which was recently published by the University of Chicago Press. She studied at Brooklyn College, the University of Chicago, where she earned her doctorate in history, and Cambridge University.

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which relegated Charles Francis to the ministry at London and made of Henry a journalist hanger-on in Washington and a professor at Harvard, was a measure of the completeness with which America had discarded its colonial traditions.

THE novel *Democracy*, published in 1880, was a description of a ruling class with the Adamses left out. It appeared anonymously, created something of a sensation after its publication in England, and while it was variously attributed to Henry Adams's wife and his best friends, almost no one seriously proposed Adams himself as its author (with the one exception of Mrs. Humphry Ward, who was soon afterwards to bring out the literary sensation of the decade in England, and who guessed Adams's authorship on the basis of slight personal acquaintance and the memory of an article of his on "Civil Service Reform," printed thirteen years earlier). Not until 1921, three years after Adams's death, was the truth of its authorship definitely revealed, although long before then, with the appearance of his *History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* and the private circulation of his *Education*, some thoughtful men must have penetrated the secret.

The heroine of *Democracy* is an intelligent, sensitive, earnest, and sharp-witted woman who performs the same role in the novel as Adams does in the *Education*, the role of the seeker after truth, the pursuer of an education. A young, attractive, and wealthy widow, who can be moved by neither the passion of love nor the greed of money, Mrs. Madeleine Lee decides that in Washington politics she might find the meaning of contemporary life. "She wanted to see with her own eyes the action of primary forces; to touch with her own hand the massive machinery of society; to measure with her own mind the capacity of the motive power. She was bent upon getting to the heart of the great American mystery of democracy and government."

She not only gets to the heart of the mystery, but she very nearly captures it—or is captured by it—in the person of the Honorable Silas P. Ratcliffe, Senator from Illinois, known to his best friends and worst enemies as "the Prairie Giant of Peonia." Ratcliffe is the archetype of the Senator, for whom power is the whole of politics and politics the whole of life. (In the *Education*, it was enough in the way of characterization for Adams to say of one man that "he loved power as though he were still a Senator.") The Senator, particularly the ideal type from the "West" who represents the new and rootless man, is both clever and uncouth. Ratcliffe makes his first appearance at a fashionable dinner wearing gloves, he is ignorant of French, and his courtship of Mrs. Lee has nothing of the Old World delicacy of his ineffectual rival, the Southern gentleman, Mr. Carrington. Yet he almost succeeds in winning Mrs. Lee, as he has already won over his main political enemy, the President, by masterful intrigue and an unscrupulous manipulation of power. He is defeated, as it happens, by the bungling efforts of Mrs. Lee's naive sister and by a last-minute violation of a confidence on the part of Mr. Carrington (who fastidiously makes the exposure by letter rather than in person); but there is no one to frustrate his political designs because there is no more consummate an intriguer than he.

PUT baldly in this way, the story is reminiscent of the innocent maiden rescued by the fair-haired hero from the clutches of the dastardly villain. Except for the faintest skeletal resemblance of plot, however, there is nothing else in the novel to suggest the melodrama. In flesh, indeed, it is more closely akin to some of the novels of Adams's good friend Henry James, as the perspicacious Mrs. Ward suggested. It has some of James's brilliant writing—the early James—as in a passage describing Ratcliffe's reaction to the deliberate flattery of Mrs. Lee: "The Senator from Illinois rose to this gaudy fly like a huge, two-hundred-pound salmon; his white waistcoat gave out a mild silver reflection as he slowly came to the surface and gorged the hook. He made not even a plunge, not one perceptible effort to tear out the barbed weapon, but floating gently to her feet, allowed himself to be landed as though it were a pleasure."

It also has the Jamesian instinct for irony and ambiguity, applied, however, not so much to personal relations as to the play of mind. When a Congressman from Connecticut virtuously parades his championship of Civil Service Reform (a cause to which

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both Mrs. Lee and Henry Adams were committed), Ratcliffe gets the better of the exchange with the retort: "Every child in the Union knows that the most famous products of Connecticut are Yankee notions, nutmegs made of wood, and clocks that won't go. Now, your Civil Service Reform is just such another Yankee notion; it's a wooden nutmeg; it's a clock with a show case and sham works. . . . You have gone about peddling your wooden nutmegs until you have got yourself into Congress, and now you pull them out of your pockets and not only want us to take them at your own price, but you lecture us on our sins if we don't. Well! we don't mind your doing that at home. Abuse us as much as you like to your constituents. Get as many votes as you can. But don't electioneer here, because we know you intimately, and we've all been a little in the wooden nutmeg business ourselves."

Above all, it has that typical characteristic of James's novels: a complicated, even tortuous moral dilemma which must somehow be resolved in terms of the clear and certain principles of morality. That Ratcliffe's political behavior, like corruption in general, is immoral there is no doubt; but of the methods, motives, and even the principles of the reformers there is considerable doubt. When Mrs. Lee considers marrying Ratcliffe, it is not out of stupidity, gullibility, or even weakness, but precisely out of intelligence, cunning, and strength, to say nothing of excellent intentions. She can find no worthier object to which to dedicate herself than the reform of government, and if this means an association with the most powerful public figure of the time, it is surely her duty to enter into such an association. Ratcliffe appeals to her for advice. Can she refrain from giving it? If it is his responsibility to act in the best public interest, is it not hers to counsel him as to that best interest? And if, as Ratcliffe persuasively argues, he is to act in the best interest, does he not have to contrive to remain in power, and so does not Mrs. Lee have to advise him in that regard too? "What woman of thirty, with aspirations for the infinite, could resist an attack like this? . . . What was there in her aimless and useless life which made it so precious that she could not afford to fling it into the gutter, if need be, on the bare chance of enriching some fuller existence?"

When Mrs. Lee finally decides to reject Ratcliffe's offer of marriage, it is, as he is quick to point out, for reasons that are not entirely logical. In the last interview between the two, she confronts him with Carrington's letter accusing him of having taken a bribe to alter his vote. Ratcliffe admits the basic charge, but insists that nothing has changed between them. He had taken the bribe as a contribution to the campaign expenses of his party, and it was as important for his party to win the election as it had been to win the recent Civil War. "There are conflicting duties in all the transactions of life, except the simplest," he tells Mrs. Lee, adding, perhaps in sly reference to Carrington's own violation of a solemn promise: "However we may act, do what we may, we must violate some moral obligation." He reminds her that he himself had never pretended to conform to principles of "abstract morality." Indeed he had once confessed to a far more serious transgression, which Mrs. Lee had then seemed to condone. During the election of 1864, in the worst days of the war, it had seemed as if the opposing party, the pro-slavery "peace" party, would carry Illinois and with it the Union. As governor of the state, Ratcliffe had then taken it upon himself to change the election returns of certain counties so that his party would capture the state. The desperate expedient, he argues, was appropriate to the desperate situation. If Mrs. Lee did not see fit to break off their relationship in protest against an act that subverted the very principle of democracy, why should she now be horrified at the tale of a commonplace bribery?

The audacity of the man astonishes Mrs. Lee. "Was it politics," she wonders, "that had caused this atrophy of the moral senses by disuse?" Was the man a moral lunatic, ignorant of the difference between good and evil? She does not pretend to argue with him; she suspects he would be her superior in argument. She can only say that she will not marry him even to reform him because she has learned the absurdity of her trying to reform anyone or anything, least of all in politics. She will not share the profits of vice or be put in the position of having perpetually to defend immorality as a virtue.

The dramatic requirements of the novel form—or what Adams took to be those re-

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quirements—may give a deceptively optimistic color to the end of the novel. Ratcliffe is exposed as evil, and Mrs. Lee's virtue, both personal and political, is preserved. In fact, however, it is the evidence of Adams's ironic sensibility that Ratcliffe's argument is unanswered, that Mrs. Lee, in womanly fashion, can only oppose instinct to reason (moral instinct to immoral reason), and that intellectually she retires in defeat. And the intellectual defeat is also a political one, for she leaves Washington forever, convinced that reform is as vain as politics is sordid. Mrs. Lee, like Henry Adams, has been subjected to an education in failure.

With the conclusions of a radical pessimism of this sort, it is difficult to argue. What importance one assigns to these conclusions is decided less by logic or history than by personal temperament. That neither the rigors of abstract morality nor the delicacies of private morality can be the arbiters of politics is a truism that never fails to come as a shock to sensitive men of every generation. To some men, however, it comes in adolescence, as a primitive fact of life to which experience and familiarity will make them insensible; while to others, of the Henry Adams variety, it comes as the lesson of maturity, the end of an education, and remains as a permanently exposed raw nerve to be set vibrating by the least contact with society.

If this proposition about morality and politics were all that was implied in *Democracy,* the novel would properly be judged not by reference to the truth of the proposition, which is evident, but to the passion with which it is presented, its dramatic urgency and emotional subtlety. In fact, however, there is a further proposition, distinctly stated although not systematically argued, which is questionable, both as to truth and meaning. This is the proposition implied in the title, that not politics as such, but rather the politics of democracy, is the source of corruption, and that the basic antithesis is not morality against politics but morality against democracy.

"I must know," Mrs. Lee announces, "whether America is right or wrong. Just now this question is a very practical one, for I really want to know whether to believe in Mr. Ratcliffe. If I throw him overboard, everything must go, for he is only a specimen"—a specimen, she soon makes clear, of universal suffrage and democracy, and thus of corruption. Just what there is in democracy that makes it so fatally attractive to corruption is not specified. In fact, as it turns out, Ratcliffe's greatest political crime, his initiation into crime on a grand scale and perhaps even his original fall from grace, was his violation of the principle of democracy itself when he tampered with the election returns. It can be argued that this was hardly the act of a man blindly obedient to the will of the people, whose vice was the democratic one of submitting to an ignorant, bigoted, and selfish populace. It was, indeed, the act of a man as contemptuous of his constituency as the most arbitrary English Tory.

The logical and ideological point of *Democracy* is vitiated by this failure to locate the source of moral perversion. There is no satisfactory explanation of what makes Ratcliffe, regarded as a specimen of democracy, corrupt, and Carrington, a specimen of the Southern aristocracy (and thus a defender of slavery), virtuous. The defect is particularly surprising because Adams had an uncommonly rigorous notion of what constituted an explanation, and was generally disposed to a determinism of the most mechanical variety. Indeed, in the *Education* he does offer a deterministic explanation of just such phenomena as Ratcliffe and Carrington. The explanation there is in terms not of the development of democracy but of the development of engineering. The generation which came in the wake of the Civil War was "mortgaged to the railways," and required energies and talents which the Adamses obviously lacked: "They could scarcely have earned five dollars a day in any modern industry." In such a society, power alone was real. And power, Adams was convinced, "is poison." Even on a Theodore Roosevelt, whom he judged to be of "a singularly direct nature and honest intent," power had an intoxicating, almost insane, effect. This, Adams blandly noted, was "the effect of unlimited power on limited mind." It was unfortunate, but it was perhaps unavoidable, that a society driven by the railways should be possessed of such unlimited resources of power and such limited resources of mind.

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In any case, it is clear that the sober Adams, when undistracted by the dramatic confusions of the novel, did not hold democracy itself at fault. He could not always abstain from witticism: "Democracy, rightly understood, is the government of the people, by the people, for the benefit of Senators." But even in this novel, he clearly aligns himself with the forces of democracy—not a democracy that represents as the inevitable future of man the triumph of barbarism, but one that represents the only future that might conceivably mean the triumph of civilization.

One of the characters in *Democracy*, Mr. Nathan Gore, a successful historian and not so successful diplomat, gives it as his confession of faith: "I believe in democracy. I accept it. I will faithfully serve and defend it. I believe in it because it appears to me the inevitable consequence of what has gone before it. Democracy asserts the fact that the masses are now raised to higher intelligence than formerly. All our civilization aims at this mark. We want to do what we can to help it. I myself want to see the result. I grant it is an experiment, but it is the only direction society can take that is worth its taking; the only conception of its duty large enough to satisfy its instincts; the only result that is worth an effort or a risk. Every other possible step is backward, and I do not care to repeat the past." Pressed further, Mr. Gore, who parades as a cynic (he swears his audience to secrecy on the grounds that he would lose his character at home if such sentiments got out), professes to subscribe to the new democratic dogmas: faith in human nature, faith in science, and faith in the survival of the fittest. "Let us be true to our time," he urges. "If our age is to be beaten, let us die in the ranks. If it is to be victorious, let us be first to lead the column. Anyway, let us not be skulkers or grumblers."

Even this confession of faith is not without its share of irony. The fact was that neither Adams nor his spokesman, Mr. Gore, had much confidence in human nature, science, or the survival of the fittest. And surely Adams was the most persistent "skulker and grumbler" in all of American history. His support of democracy was based, in reality, not on a conviction of the truth of its dogmas, but on the belief that if, by some chance, they should prove to be true, they would be the most important and wonderful truths ever to confront man. In his *History*, which Adams started to work on as soon as he finished his *Democracy*, he was more explicit:

> If Americans were right in thinking that the next necessity of human progress was to lift the average man upon an intellectual and social level with the most favored, they stood at least three generations nearer than Europe to their common goal. The destinies of the United States were certainly staked, without reserve or escape, on the soundness of this doubtful and even improbable principle, ignoring or overthrowing the institutions of Church, aristocracy, family, army, and political intervention, which long experience had shown to be needed for the safety of society. Europe might be right in thinking that without such safeguards society must come to an end; but even Europeans must concede that there was a chance, if no greater than one in a thousand, that America might, at least for a time, succeed. If this stake of temporal and eternal welfare stood on the winning card; if man actually should become more virtuous and enlightened, by mere process of growth, without Church or paternal authority; if the average human being could accustom himself to reason with the logical process of Descartes and Newton!—what then?

Then, Adams seemed to be saying, it would all have been worth while—his own failure and the temporary dominance of the Ratcliffes. In any event, America, he was sure, was "the only country now worth working for."

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE PROSPECTS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

Today's Economists' Somewhat Rosier View

DANIEL BELL

IT IS a striking cultural phenomenon, especially for anyone with a sharp memory of the 30's, that American capitalism has obtained grudging regard and a new theoretical definition from critics, especially Keynesian ones, who once were hostile. The term "*American* capitalism" points to a necessary distinction, for neo-classical economics, which marked out the ground rules for capitalism in general, has never lacked competent intellectual spokesmen. The case for the free market propounded most sharply in our time by Frank Knight—the proposition that a competitive society is the indispensable *model* to obtain both efficient allocation of resources and free consumer choice—has proved itself a compelling one. It has been accepted even by socialist theoreticians like Oskar Lange and A. P. Lerner who, turning the table, argued that only a socialist society, by removing the structural rigidities inherent in a large corporate economy, could restore the free market.

Who, however, was prepared to justify the American capitalist reality, the salient feature of which was an (apparently) paralyzing corporate giantism? By 1940, the majority of the younger economists were convinced that our economy was entering a phase of "secular [in the sense of long-term or permanent] stagnation." The prophet of this new creed was Alvin Hansen of Harvard, but its patristic source was clearly John Maynard Keynes. Although for decades a chorus of Marxian economists had chanted a requiem for the aging capitalist system, in less apocalyptic fashion Keynes located the reasons for degeneration. The system was not functioning, he said, because savings (meaning, on the whole, profits) were not passing over smoothly into investment (which expands production) but were piling up and choking the economic mechanism.

KEYNES had sketched the outlines of the modern "stagnation theory" in his famous *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, written in 1919. The argument, novel then, is familiar now. The compelling social myth that held society together, said Keynes in a metaphor, was the "non-consumption of the cake." Workers were "cajoled by custom, convention, authority" into accepting a small share of the increasing production of the 19th century, while the capitalist, free to consume it, made "the duty of 'saving' nine-tenths a virtue, and the growth of the cake the object of true religion." Thus a huge share of production was saved for investment. This tied in with the reality of the 19th century: a growing population, which needed food, clothing, shelter, and employment; new sources of foods and raw materials, which demanded exploitation; the development of technology, which permitted new industries. Under these circumstances the entrepreneur could go on "baking cakes in order not to eat them."

J. K. GALBRAITH'S *American Capitalism*, published earlier this year, is the most important of a number of efforts to take a new look at that fabulous invalid, American capitalism—which, while it fulfilled all the worst predicted for it by its critics up to 1940, has since been doing much better than expected. DANIEL BELL, who here reviews Mr. Galbraith's book in the light of the economic discussions of the past fifteen years, is now an editor of *Fortune* magazine. Mr. Bell is the author of a book-length monograph on the history of American socialism in the recently published joint volume *Socialism and American Life*, and he has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY.

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But this was, after all, said Keynes, only an extraordinary episodic period in economic history. By the 1920's, population growth had slowed down, investment opportunities were vanishing, the spirit of the entrepreneur was flagging. And, perhaps most important of all, savings were losing their social function. The habitual holding back of large sums from consumption no longer had the useful effect of increasing production; rather it led to economic crises—and stagnation.

Keynes's writings in the next fifteen years were a detailed effort to document his analysis. The root evil was the bourgeois "virtue" of thrift ("the penny wisdom of Gladstonian finance") and the necessary intellectual task of the generation was to exorcise that ghost. Keynes's great work on *Interest, Money and Employment* was not only an economic tract but equally a savage sociological polemic against the "puritanism . . . which has neglected the arts of production as well as those of enjoyment."

His aim was the "euthanasia of the *rentier*," enjoying a free and unhampered consumption in a "quasi-stationary" community which, because it had no desire or need to grow, also had little use for savings. But since this psychological revolution against saving was difficult to effect, only one force could effectively guarantee the movement of stored, useless capital into channels that would revive economic activity—and that was the state. With one bold stroke, thus, Keynes reintroduced the study of *political* economy, which for him meant a statement of human aims to be defined consciously by an organized consensus (the social interest), as against "*pure* economics" or the "natural laws" of distribution, as determined through the market by the sum total of individual decisions. The political problem of how to reach a consensus, and apply its decisions, which for us raises many difficult questions of bureaucratization and power, did not trouble Keynes. Writing in the full stream of English political thought, with its sense of homogeneity and the image of a "common will embodied in the policy of the State," he felt such problems could be solved simply and rationally. His program, "moderately conservative in its implications," excluded any question of the ownership of the instruments of production; all that it required, he wrote blandly, was a "somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment" in order to assure full employment.

THE theory of "oversavings," which Keynes had formulated as the key to depression, was picked up enthusiastically by the younger economists and became the guiding conception of the Temporary National Economic Committee investigations and monographs of the late 30's. Where Keynes's *General Theory* had been analytical, the American school sought to add a historical dimension as further proof of the impending "secular stagnation." The lead was taken principally by Alvin Hansen and the materials summarized in Hansen's major work, *Fiscal Policies and Business Cycles*, in 1941.

His theory, built on the statistical investigations largely of the German economist Spiethoff and the Russian Kondratieff, stated that the 19th century was a unique era wherein a fateful combination of factors had combined to create an industrial explosion. We were, however, said Hansen, beached at the end of a series of "long waves" whose force was now spent. Mid-19th-century America (1840 to 1870) had been propelled by the age of the railroad; the first part of the 20th century (1890 to 1930) had been the age of electrification and the automobile. But we cannot now "take for granted," Hansen wrote, "the rapid emergence of new industries as rich in investment opportunities. . . ." Other factors also tended to create stagnation: chief of these was a decline in population growth, the disappearance of new territory, and the growth of monopoly and imperfect competition, which, by protecting prices, inhibited the introduction of new machinery which a competitive process would have stimulated.

Within the operational machinery of the capitalist system itself certain internal forces worked to calcify the society. Keynes had not been concerned with industrial organization. Hansen was. He argued that "bigness" was a cause of depression since large corporations tended to accumulate huge depreciation reserves for replacement of plant and equipment, which remained unspent and also reduced the need for outside money. In addition, the growth of "capital-saving" (as opposed to labor-saving) machinery, which meant a long-term tendency to lower the ratio of capital to output, added to the piling up of idle capital. Hansen's conclusions provided a rationale for New Deal policies: state intervention to move the idle capital, attempts to break up "monopolies," and a shift to a high-consumption, low-growth economy.

This then was the image of capitalism in the early 40's: the capitalist was an old miser sitting

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on his pile of sterile bullion, which strangled the economy. Since *he* found it impossible to inject it into an economy which needed it if that economy was to provide jobs and the standard of living it was technologically capable of producing, the government would have to force him to disgorge it—or tax it away and spend it on useful projects.

II

THE conservative counterattack arose on the question of "politicalizing" the economy. The lead-off book was Frederick Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. Hayek, like his master Ludwig von Mises, regarded laissez-faire economics as producing an automatic equilibrium. Crises arose primarily because of the arbitrary tampering with the economic system by the state. In their desire to pay off debts cheaply and to make money, governments and banks have inflationary proclivities; the result is an overexpansion of credit, and the interest rate is deflected from its true purpose of allocating savings either into investment or consumption. The state, in Hayek's view, was not an executive committee of a ruling class, but (in a view derived from Schmoller and Max Weber) an independent bureaucratic force which, by its essentially leviathan nature, was anti-freedom.

The business community hailed the Hayek volume with alacrity. But the appreciation was more for its catch-phrase title than for its prescriptions. After all, what businessman was prepared for the complete elimination of tariffs, "fair-trade" pricing, price "umbrellas," and similar props to eliminate competition? On the other hand, the liberals, while sensitive in the abstract to the dangers of "statism," could see in Hayek only some stale Liberty League clichés and refused the challenge to measure governmental "welfare" steps against the dangers of concentrated power. In short, except as an ideology, no one really wanted "economic liberalism."

Because of the ideological use to which his book was put, it soon became apparent that Hayek could never become a convincing adversary of Keynesian thought.

IF THERE was one conservative theoretician who could take the measure of Keynes, and possibly even of Marx, it was Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, published in 1942, received notice only in a small circle. Only in 1946, with a new edition and under the cumulative weight of four years' critical appreciation, did the volume gain wider attention. By the time of his death in 1950, a stream of exegetical writing had already begun to appear and a number of Schumpeter's early works and collected essays were being issued in book form.

The outline of Schumpeter's main theoretical statements had already been firmly laid down in a major work, *The Theory of Economic Development*, written in 1912 at the young age of twenty-seven. Thirty years later the time was ripe for these ideas to gain acceptance. On the one hand, U.S. business, as a result of its prodigious production effort during the war, was experiencing a tremendous surge of self-confidence. At the same time, through writers like Peter Drucker and the editors of *Fortune*, it was gaining a new rationale based on its sense of social responsibility and the discovery that, unlike its avuncular European kin, American capitalism had still untapped dynamism and drive. On the other hand, the intellectuals, now frightened by the implications of statism, which they once accepted uncritically, and impressed by the lack of the recession every Keynesian economist had so confidently predicted would follow the war ("sixty million jobs" was reached in 1947), were increasingly silent or disoriented.

Schumpeter was important as an intellectual lodestar because he posed his arguments on the very grounds that American Keynesians (and Marxists) had set as the conditions of the debate: he spoke not of the problems of maximum production under the perfectly equilibrated competitive balances of classical economics, but of the concrete social organization, capitalism, operating in historical time. His purpose was to understand the capitalist social organism by examining sociologically and historically the conditions of its emergence, growth, and decline. For this reason among others he was disdainful of Keynes, who, for all the radical implications of his work, operated fundamentally within the framework of a static economics abstracted from concrete history. Keynes dealt with "phenomena whose range is limited by his assumption that techniques of production remained unchanged." But it was just the fact that techniques of production, under capitalism, do change rapidly that was decisive for Schumpeter.

Schumpeter's defense of capitalism took, as the crucial starting point, the fact that capitalist society was characterized by a constant rate of productive expansion. "The capitalist

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achievement does not typically consist in providing more silk stockings for queens but in bringing them within the reach of factory girls in return for steadily decreasing effort." Using rough computations, Schumpeter pointed out that productivity had been increasing the wealth of American society at a compound rate of 2 per cent a year. But increase in productivity was possible only through the activity of entrepreneurs, the engineers of social change. By cutting costs, opening new markets, creating new types of production, in short through innovation, the entrepreneur is able to achieve a temporary monopoly position which is the source of *his* profit. Capitalism can continue only if it maintains entrepreneurial rewards whose "short-run inequity" is the price that the masses must pay for the long-run rising living standards that capitalism can achieve.

Schumpeter's iconoclasm extended too to the defense of "bigness." Bigness was a virtue because only big companies could afford the huge and sometimes fruitless outlays for research which were necessary for technical change. Bigness, in that sense, represented the social price for technical change.

But what of the Great Depression? Schumpeter denied that the period from 1929 to 1932 represented a decisive break in the propelling mechanism of capitalist production, as he described it. Contrary to the views of most economists, classical or Keynesian, he calmly accepted depressions as natural, inevitable, and even therapeutic for the growth of the economy. Technological revolutions periodically reshape the existing structure of industry. "The capitalist process, not by coincidence but by virtue of its mechanism, progressively raises the standards of life of the masses. *It does so through a sequence of vicissitudes, the severity of which is proportional to the speed of the advance.*" Any process of change provides disruption; a depression is a normal process of readjustment and displacement, a "shaking out" of the antiquated, the marginal, and inefficient. The depression of 1929 remained for him a special case (because of the "speed of advance" in the 20's and because it capped a "long wave" of economic growth) matched only in relative severity by the depression of 1873-79. Recovery was slower in the U.S. than, say, France because a new social atmosphere and new fiscal policies in the 30's held down private investment. The effort of economic policy to redistribute income and increase consumption had, according to Schumpeter, only inhibited progress.

Against the pessimism of Hansen, and Keynes, regarding the possibilities of an expanding economy, Schumpeter held a vision of new frontiers. "Technological possibilities," he wrote, "are an uncharted sea." It might take the form of great innovations through a new "age of chemicals," which would succeed electricity as a source of investment, or it might be a multiplicity of new products no single one of which might match the impact of, say, the automobile, but which collectively could provide the stimulus toward new growth.

The future, however, rested on the entrepreneur. In his theory of the entrepreneur Schumpeter confronts Marx, and Keynes, and in fact the entire classical school of economics. For Marx, economic growth was a product of the accumulation of capital ever seeking new outlets; Keynes saw these savings as piling up and stagnating without government intervention and direction. Schumpeter denied the theoretical basis for chronic oversavings, and his answer to Marx, and Keynes, rested on a historical foundation. For him, the expansion of industry arises not from the "push" of capital, but the "pull" of the entrepreneur. For Schumpeter, industry is financed typically by banks and by the expansion of credit. The entrepreneur works with "other people's money." To collect money from old and unproductive channels, and to command resources, he pays interest. His reward is profit. The function of government, therefore, is not to direct investment, as Keynes saw it, but to encourage the entrepreneur.

And yet, said Schumpeter paradoxically, the *vision* of Marx was correct; capitalism is indeed doomed, but not for the reasons Marx advanced. Capitalism decomposes because its mentality creates a social atmosphere hostile to its functioning, and because, at the same time, the bureaucratization of business atrophies its driving force, the entrepreneurial function.

Paradoxically, capitalism is destroyed by its success. The creation of an open society arouses greater wants and expectations than even capitalism can fulfill. After all, even in the ideal circumstances of America it is still not possible to increase productivity by more than 2-3 per cent a year. If the case for capitalism rests on its long-run achievements, in the short run it is the profits and inefficiencies that dominate the

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picture, and these continually offer ammunition for its critics. And capitalism itself fosters the criticism that threatens it. "The capitalist process," writes Schumpeter, "rationalizes behavior and ideas, and by so doing chases from our minds, along with metaphysical belief, mystic and romantic ideas of all sorts. . . ." The critical turn of mind that such rationality creates knows no bounds, and it turns against all institutions, against all accepted tradition and custom, against all authority; it culminates logically in the creation of the "intellectual." The intellectual is both critic and utopian: he needs a hero. The capitalist unheroically estimates rather than gambles, appraises rather than acts. "The stock exchange," as Schumpeter says wryly, "is a poor substitute for the Holy Grail." And so the intellectual, the product of capitalist rationalism, turns his back on the system, and infects the rest of the society with his disappointment. Similarly, the state, responsive to the anti-capitalist temper of the society, enacts legislation which is restrictive of the entrepreneurial spirit.

The capitalist system is also menaced from within. The first reason, already alluded to, is the replacement of the entrepreneur, the man who broke "the cake of custom," with the "executive." Even innovation is routinized, and technology becomes the business of a team of specialists; economic progress tends to become depersonalized and automatized.

The change in the nature of the enterprise means, too, the replacement of family property by large institutions whose profits are distributed to an enormous mass. Now property and the family have been the twin pillars of bourgeois society. Through the family, wealth was conserved, property maintained, status established and goals defined. The capitalist accumulated rather than spent for the sake of the family enterprise. Today, with skill rather than property as the fulcrum of power and position, with a different evaluation of marriage and the family, the rationale and the driving power which infused the bourgeois temper has gone. Inevitably, the bureaucratization of capitalism chokes it.

Schumpeter's appeal for the old "left" intellectual is apparent. Here was a rarity: an economist with a tragic sense of life. Moreover his doctrine allowed capitalism's critics to have their cake and eat it too: capitalism *was* good, but it had now become depersonalized and bureaucratized—the very charges they had themselves levied against the system. And yet, for the plain and prosaic tasks of understanding the specific problems ahead, Schumpeter's insights are of limited help. In his brilliant book, Schumpeter talks of "capitalism," rather than, like Keynes, of "economies." He does not talk, however, of concrete capitalist societies. It was thus not easy to notice that in his analyses he selected the economics of American industry and the sociology of European society, and derived his justifications for capitalism from the first and his apocalyptic visions as to its fate from the second. As David McCord Wright has pointed out, Schumpeter is able to predict the destruction of capitalism only because he conceives of democracy within the framework of the European philosophical tradition, as the rule of the "masses," always tending to break up and level the superior orders of society. American democracy, with its philosophical roots in Jeffersonianism and its development into a multi-group society, may have very different consequences for capitalism from those of European democracy. But this Schumpeter did not see.

III

If we are to obtain a realistic picture of what is happening to capitalist society, the inherent contradictions between the visions of Keynes and Schumpeter will have to be resolved. For while both agree that traditional capitalism is giving way, their theories as to the reasons for the change are so divergent as to give rise to directly contradictory proposals for policies that might save it. It is one of the virtues of J. K. Galbraith's *American Capitalism* (published by Houghton Mifflin) that the problems common to Schumpeter and Keynes are posed in less apocalyptic and more manageable terms and some implicit attempt at reconciliation is made.*

Galbraith's starting point is the remarkable "failure of nerve" by all strata of American society regarding the future of capitalism at a time when actually the productive apparatus is

*Since the Keynesian economic model is essentially static, and the Schumpeterian economic model primarily historic, an exact reconciliation is extremely difficult. Schumpeter thought of Keynesian "oversaving" as a "special case" within his own system. In recent years, a number of English economists, particularly J. R. Hicks and Roy Harrod, have sought to extend a dynamic system from the staples of Keynesian concerns. A synthesis of the two systems which would unite the Keynesian problems of income, output, and employment, with the Schumpeterian emphasis on entrepreneur, innovation, and equilibrium, would be extremely fruitful.

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expanding at a faster rate than at any previous period in U. S. history. The business community seems almost to have been mesmerized by Marx into believing that capitalism is inherently unstable. The industrial managers, no less than the liberal economists, expected a sharp economic collapse on V-J day and each year thereafter; hence, the low inventory policy, the limited dividend policy and building of huge reserves, the jagged behavior of the stock market. All this in the "face of record income and yields," as Galbraith writes. The farmer, and Congress, revealed similar concerns. "These were bonanza years such as few had ever dreamed of," yet for five years following the war Congress was tinkering with price supports and crop guarantees. Meanwhile, the liberals were bemoaning the increasing concentration of economic power which World War II allegedly accelerated, the conservatives were conjuring up ghastly visions of the Omnipotent State which would reduce their freedom and install an oppressive bureaucracy. Yet if all these dire predictions were true, Galbraith observes, the conservative after twenty years of Democratic rule would have long since been dispossessed, the liberal become a "mere puppet" in the business society.

Truth is, none of these pictures even closely approximates present reality. Then why these strong *idées fixes*; why this high degree of illusion and insecurity? The answer, says Galbraith, is that both camps are *"captives of ideas which cause them to view the world with misgivings or alarm."* These ideas come out of the system of classical economics and its theory of power.

Classical economists rooted their system in a fear of concentrated power. A liberal society, therefore, was one that diffused power. In the economic realm, no single individual or group should be able to dictate what was to be produced and who would do it. They envisaged a market society in which prices fluctuated readily in response to supply and demand, where producers were free to enter or depart from business, etc. The corollary assumption, operating from economic deterministic premises, is that free markets make free men. If economic power were fragmented, then political power would be atomized as well.

The fact is of course, that in the major industrial areas of production oligopoly, i.e., the dominance of a few, is the prevailing feature of the society. Prices are "administered" rather than set in the market; other firms follow this "price leadership," entry into the business is exceedingly difficult, etc. The liberal, seeing this concentration of economic power, believes it to be dangerous and seeks to break it up.

THE singular point that Galbraith makes, following the lead of Schumpeter, is that while oligopoly does exist, few of the consequences the liberals fear actually eventuate. The pattern of oligopoly is natural and almost inevitable in a high-investment economy, and turns out to be not the product of any conspiratorial plot, as the early Money Trust investigations and later Pecora and TNEC investigations thought, but of the market itself. In most manufacturing enterprises the maximum advantages of mass production are possible only through giant size. As a result, entry into industry is easy only when it is very new. As an industry grows, the firms already in operation grow, realizing the technical efficiencies gained by large-scale production. The established firms also gain from "the economics of experience." A new firm, when it can mobilize the capital, faces the additional handicaps of lack of personnel, untried executives, etc. So new competition is difficult. Oligopoly in any industry is likely to be achieved in the short space of a few years, and once equilibrium has been achieved, the degree of concentration remains remarkably stable, as M. A. Adelman points out in a revealing study of industrial concentration (*Review of Economic Statistics*, November 1951). "If there has been any strong and continuing tendency to a greater concentration in manufacturing . . . these statistics do not show it."

Against the yardstick of a pure theory of price, the result may be some distortions and inefficiencies in the allocation of resources. But the compensation lies in the technological progress fostered by the large corporation. "It is admirably equipped for financing technical development. Its organization provides strong incentives for undertaking development and for putting it into use. . . . The power that enables the firm to have some influence on price insures that the resulting gains will not be passed on to the public by imitators (who have stood none of the costs of development) before the outlay for development can be recouped. *In this way market power protects the incentive to technical development.*" In those areas where the competitive model still obtains, notably agriculture, the farmer does almost no research on his own

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behalf, the job is left to the state experiment stations and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Here is a strong and sophisticated defense of bigness on the criteria of *performance*. But—and this is where Galbraith seeks to explain why businessmen and liberals are captives to the old phantoms—the businessman cannot admit he exercises tremendous economic power. "This is partly a matter of tradition; it is also an invitation for attention from the public and from the anti-trust section of the Justice Department. Hence, in order to justify his unwillingness to accept federal regulation, he has to deny his exercise of economic power altogether, and maintain the ideology of competition."

THE other side of the coin is the phantasm of the liberal: the specter of untrammeled corporate power standing firm on the "commanding heights of the economy." Against this view, Galbraith develops his theory of "countervailing powers," a phrase which in its imaginative simplicity crystallizes a feeling a number of observers have had about our society. Generally this feeling has been summed up in the image of "functional blocs," such as industry, labor, farmers, that confront and check each other.

Galbraith's view is more subtle in its characterization. "Dogmatically stated . . . private economic power is held in check by the countervailing power of those who are subject to it. The first begets the second. The long trend toward concentration of industrial enterprise in the hands of a relatively few firms has brought into existence not only strong sellers, as the economists have supposed, but also strong buyers, as they have failed to see." The self-regulation of the market in America today comes not from the competition of producers, where oligopoly prevails, but the self-generating counterpower of buyers and sellers.

The theory is most evident in the labor-relations field where strong unions have arisen to check the power of corporations in wage determination. But it operates in other areas as well: great buying chains like Sears, Roebuck were able to avoid the oligopolistic domination of rubber prices because of their bulk purchases; A & P, by threatening to go into the processing business, could bring down the price of food supplies. (Galbraith writes, "There are no consumer co-operatives of any importance in the United States . . . because the chain stores preempted the gains of countervailing power first.") The power of the auto companies curbed steel. (Until recently, when the general practice was outlawed, Detroit was the only city in the United States not subject to the discriminatory basing-point pricing in steel.) In some instances, like the building trades, the powers that should oppose each other have entered into collusion, with a consequent loss of economic efficiency.

These economic valences developed in the 20's when buyer combined against seller. Where groups like farmers and workers were unable to generate such balances, the state was forced to step in and help. In the case of the farmers, the effort was begun by Hoover, whose Federal Farm Board undertook to sponsor a system of national co-operatives. In general, however, the New Deal established the countervailing power of the disadvantaged groups. From this theory, the substitution of countervailing power for competition as the regulator of private economic power, Galbraith seeks to establish a yardstick for state action, not for regulation, or even "trust-busting," but for the development, where needed, of countervailing power.

In all this, Galbraith has skillfully developed a realistic theory of political economy, more suitable than the old competitive one to a world of economic behemoths. And yet, Galbraith is enough of a Keynesian to know this is not enough. "We have within the economy no mechanism which acts autonomously to insure proper performance; it is sadly evident from experience as well as from theory that the peacetime norm of the American economy is not necessarily stability at a high level of production and employment." The need, therefore, is for some form of centralized government decision, namely in the area of fiscal policy so as to influence the total demand for goods through taxation or government spending. "If the Keynesian formula is workable, then the last of the major reasons for alarm over American capitalism dissolves."

IV

YET the book fails in a singular manner. It never answers its own question: *why* are the business community and the left captives to a description of reality that no longer exists; *why*, in effect, is the myth more compelling than the reality? To reply, as Galbraith does, by supplying a truer picture of the reality is merely like telling a neurotic that his fears are groundless; they may be, but the answer cannot convince the neurotic of the fact until the

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sources of the fear are laid bare. The sources involve an examination of some dialectical processes which raise the question not only of the new nature of capitalist reality, but some quite new challenges to its survival.

Perhaps the most important fact, sociologically, about the American business community today is the *insecurity* of the managerial class. The corporation may have an assured continuity; its administrators have not. This is a consequence of the swift and remarkable breakdown of "family capitalism" and the transformation to corporate capitalism. Of modern writers, only Schumpeter (in his *Imperialism and Social Classes*) has understood the class system of Western society fundamentally as a family system. Yet this was central in the thinking of older moralists. William Godwin attacked the major institutions of bourgeois society by calling for the abolition of marriage and private property. Malthus, his great adversary, knew these as the "twin pillars" of society. The family was a means of maintaining status, marriage a means of conserving property. (Love, a romantic concept, was an extracurricular activity.) Through inheritance, property was legally transmitted. The family and property system maintained a class system. It gave its members a common set of values, it provided a milieu for marriage and the transmission of status. In European society, the property and family system still frames the society; the remarkable fact about American capitalism is the breakdown within two generations of the family system. Despite Ford, Swift, Grace, and du Pont, America's "Sixty Families" are a fact of the past.

The new class of managers that has succeeded them, recruited from the general grab bag of middle-class life, lacks the assured sense of justification which the older class-rooted system provided. Hence the growing need of achievement as a sign of success and the importance of ideology as a means of justification. Ideology serves as a social cement, binding the business class together. The corporations are today largely independent of the money markets and are less subject to the overt coordination practiced by finance capitalists of the early decades of the century. But the process of action is now mediated, albeit with greater imprecision and with more internal clash of interests, through a common ideology.

Since the new managers are insecure and defensive about their status, the need to retain the older justifications of capitalism is strong. These are, in a sense, the only justifications the managers know. (Only recently, with the emphasis on productivity and performance, are new justifications appearing. As in industry we have had a movement from "ownership" to "control," so in the symbolism there is a parallel move from "property" to "enterprise.") At the same time, the shift in power from the economic realm to the political also strengthens the need to retain a system of justifications—the competitive model of capitalism—which emphasizes the system of decentralized power and minimizes the role of the interventionist state.

These reasons would apply primarily to the managers. Among the middle-sized business concerns—more of whom are predominantly family enterprises—other factors enter. The very amorphousness of society, the rise of new and threatening interest groups, the emergence of social movements and of ideologies, heighten the anxieties of people who, within their small ponds, once had power and now find themselves in the currents of swift-moving streams. It is among this group that one finds the fierce Taft partisans, the crabbed "small-town" mind.

The amorphousness of society poses a problem, too, for the liberal. For in the past decade, or more precisely since the beginning of the war economy, the liberal, too, has not shared power, at least not to the degree he once did in the early days of the New Deal. The polity has become like a Calder mobile, in rough and uneven balance as different parts swing around to the winds of war mobilization. More often than not, the crucial decisions, for example, the distribution of government contracts and the allocation of metals, are *technical* decisions, motivated by the simple need of commanding available resources with the greatest speed. But the sense behind technical decisions is not generally known, and it is easier to see or hunt for some hidden reason or power source behind the decision.

Hence the social compulsions among different groups to deny the new reality of "countervailing power."

But in addition, the countervailing system of modern society, both in its political and economic aspects, is itself in the process of being shattered by inflation and war. Countervailing power operates within a framework of relative scarcity of demand—that is, where the buyer calls the tune. Under inflation, where

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a seller's market prevails, the buyer is helpless, and the seller's price is passed along to the market. The threat of inflation itself arises, principally, from war. And the combination of the two provides the greatest danger to a present-day capitalism defined and justified as a system of decentralized economic decisions. For inflation and war tend to centralize power in the *state* to compensate for the disappearance of countervailing power in the society. Administrative decision rather than "rationing by purse" becomes the chief means of allocating resources and making the production and consumption decisions in the economy.

Curiously, the problems caused by a permanent war economy Galbraith avoids almost completely. The "creeping socialism" of which the Republicans complain so bitterly is the product not of any willed, ideological plan, but the hardly conscious response of the society to the challenge of war. The most important change in the American economy in the last decade has been the growth of the federal budget. During the New Deal decade, government expenditures never went higher than seven billions a year, yet in peacetime 1953 they will reach 85 billion dollars. Of every dollar spent in 1953, eighty-eight cents will be for defense and payment of past wars; social security, health and welfare, education and housing comprise 4 per cent of the budget. A Republican administration cannot affect appreciably the total magnitude of spending; it can, through tax policy, only effect the distribution of the burden. Thus, the key economic decision—the size of the budget—is, in a war economy, out of the full reach of the business community or that of any other single group in the country.

The degree of freedom in a capitalist economy—and the working out of countervailing power—depends on the degree of mobilization necessary to meet the needs of war. For while individual companies and powerful groups may be able to gain special advantage, the main organizing features of the system impose a technical logic that can only be ignored at peril.

A war economy involves a detailed coordination of diverse items which can only be achieved by requisitioning. It means not only the allocation of basic metals, for example, but the detailed scheduling which controls the literal day-to-day operations of the company. In a modern industrial economy, the whole society turns, as the nursery rhyme, on the "want of a nail." So detailed are the technical requirements of direct planning that in the case of nickel, one of the critical "nails" last year, the NPA was forced to allot the precise quantity of nickel for the individual steel melt necessary for each ingot which the manufacturer produced.

For the moment, a complete war economy is still some distance away. But if the "readiness economy" through which we are now passing provides for more freedom than a war economy, it also creates greater problems for a capitalist market society. For under conditions in which a stable and not overwhelming percentage of the national production is used for war goods, a question that has been left moot for twelve years is beginning to reassert itself: whether the marvelous productivity of the American economy can be utilized to the full without war orders.

The argument is made that since we can produce for war we can produce for peace. But production for war implies one kind of society and production for peace another. It is easy to harness the productive power for war since there is only one single, huge buyer who requires only a limited number of items, and who sets his own prices. A market economy, involving multiple consumer choices and wide varieties of products, inevitably creates waste and disequilibrium when demands are sated and tastes shift. Who can guarantee, for example, a constant rate of consumer demand for television so that the industry, as with war orders, can budget its capital and material needs for a period of time and make calculations regarding future investment? A certain amount of "frictional" unemployment is always inevitable in a more or less free and somewhat flexible economy; it is the price for free consumer choice (although we can try to reduce the friction by unemployment insurance, severance pay, retraining programs, etc.).

The postwar experience is of limited value in pursuing the debate. From a peak of 135 billions in 1944, government expenditures dropped to only 25 billion dollars in 1946; despite this major contraction of demand, total output in the economy fell only 15 per cent. A large backlog of consumer demand, steady rebuilding of depleted inventories, and new plant expansion had taken up the slack. In early 1947, the economists were again pessimistic, as consumption goods (textiles, shoes, clothing) began to slump. The export market that had held up also began to slip. But the Marshall Plan and

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a boom in home building created counterpressures.

In a basic sense, the economy is more resistant to shock than it was after World War I. Firm farm-price supports plus a limited redistribution of income (through veterans' payments, social security, and the like) provide a minimum planking. Structural changes in the corporation are significant: during 1946-48, corporations reinvested 62 per cent of their profits after taxes, as compared with 31 per cent in 1929 and 41 per cent three years before the war. Contrary to the gloomy predictions of the demographers, the American birth rate is steadily rising and one of the chief factors behind the steady expansion of late 19th-century economy has been reestablished. (Alvin Hansen based his theory of secular stagnation principally on the falling birthrate.)

These are structural facts on the plus side of the ledger. On the minus side, new instabilities are being introduced into the economy mostly by political countervailing forces. Antiquated industries, like Northern textiles, utilize political pressure to maintain outmoded and dilapidated plants. Wage rates tend to be "sticky" so that prices cannot fall or readjust easily and so an employer will tend to cut production instead. The pressure for spending creates a long-run inflationary swell which strands, in the side waters, significant salaried and *rentier* segments of the society. Most important, the growth of a permanent war section of the economy creates need for its permanent maintenance lest its abrupt suspension create, as it would in the aircraft and electronic industries, a terrific slump.

THE interesting fact is that American ideologues are finding virtues, many of them proper ones, in American capitalism at a time when the basic features of the society are undergoing decisive changes, not under the corrosive acid of "creeping socialism," but the continued pounding of the garrison economy. Oddly, the best of these ideologues—the writers of *Fortune's* "Permanent Revolution" as well as Galbraith—fail to discuss (*Fortune* even to mention) the question of a permanent war economy.

The key question remains one of *political* economy. On a technical level, economic answers to the organization of production, control of inflation, maintenance of full employment, etc., are available. Political answers, in an interest-group society like ours, are not so easy. But in the long run, the problems of the distribution of burdens and the nature of controls cannot be deflected. The statist impulses of a semi-war economy with its technical imperatives must clash with the restless anti-statist attitudes of the corporate managers—with labor standing uneasily along the sidelines. It is hard to see how the first Republican administration in twenty years, even though it represents these anti-statist corporate managers, is going to be able to change very drastically the course of our economic development. The international situation imposes the same imperatives on Republicans as on Democrats, and the semi-war or war economy that is made necessary by it inevitably casts government in the role of controller and dominator of the economy. The real political question in domestic affairs will then become which of the groups will bear the costs of the added burdens.

The intellectual rehabilitation of American capitalism is being completed while the reality itself is rapidly changing; the newest ideologies may become outmoded and require new revisions long before they have had time to get themselves widely understood and accepted.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

On Academic Responsibility

To the Editor of Commentary:

Readers of Commentary will be interested in the enclosed letter from George N. Shuster, president of Hunter College, to the members of his faculty. In our current concern over what effect governmental and institutional anti-Communist measures may have on the intellectual atmosphere of our colleges, it is well to be reminded, as Dr. Shuster here reminds us, that even in a free society the exercise of freedom is never entirely without risk. One function of a democratic government is, surely, to protect the rights of its citizens, and one function of an institution of learning is doubtless to protect the rights of its members. But is not the free man one who is willing to accept the normal risks of freedom, not one who feels that he cannot speak his mind or act as he thinks right without an absolute guarantee that he will be shielded from all unpleasant consequences?

Evelyn Diamond

Department of Speech
Hunter College Evening Session
New York City

October 20, 1952

Members of the Faculty
Hunter College

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Certain recent happenings which have resulted from inquiries into subversive activities by Government agencies may well give rise to quite unwarranted fears, and therewith to curtailment of educational activities which must be encouraged if public opinion in the United States is to remain vigorous and forthright. I have some reason to believe that these anxieties are not absent from the campus of Hunter College. This letter is an attempt to clarify the situation.

The character of the Communist Party has led to the passage of legislation designed to curtail its potential influence. Hunter College and its sister institutions are affected in particular by the City Charter, Section 903 of which has been held by the courts to mean that failure to answer questions about membership in the Communist Party when those questions are put by a duly constituted investigative body automatically leads to dismissal from employment by the City. All this has been very well known for some time. The Board of Higher Education could not, even if it desired to do so, disregard this mandate.

There are, however, no laws and no rulings by the Board which constitute any sort of limitation on the non-Communist civic and intellectual interests of the Faculty, with this exception: attacks on the race or religion of any student are forbidden. This does not mean that a chance remark or an expression of opinion on a controversial subject will be made an issue. Your College administration will defend to the uttermost any member of the staff from suspicion or retaliation except in those instances in which a chronic seizure of vocal prejudice is indicated.

In every other respect the Faculty should not only feel entirely free to act as responsible citizens but, indeed, must be convinced that such conduct is indispensable. When I hear that younger members of the staff, particularly those without tenure, are warned not to act as faculty advisers to student clubs having a political character, I am deeply shocked. No victory the Communist Party could possibly win in this country would be more decisive than would be success in depriving younger instructors of an opportunity to give the leadership which only they can provide. After one has reached a certain age, one acquires for students a manifest august dignity which usually consorts poorly with what they look upon as club life. We must therefore rely on our less venerable colleagues for assistance in this vitally important matter.

Far from gazing upon willingness to share in student enthusiasms and even in student mistakes as an indication of brashness, I am hereby insisting to all Chairmen and Administrative Officers of the College that they look with special benevolence on those members of the staff who do not succumb to current fears but who roll up their sleeves and go to work. Suppose the situation does involve certain dangers. If we can ask a Marine to go up a Korean hill with a grenade in each hand, we can surely expect an instructor in Hunter College not to tremble for the safety of his wife and children if he sits down an evening and

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listens to students discuss General Eisenhower or the size of the New York City welfare budget.

I came to Hunter College in 1939. Since then I have sometimes been troubled and occasionally annoyed. But nothing that has been said about the College in all these years is more disturbing than are the reports alluded to above. I shall hope they are not true. And I shall look forward to receiving evidence to that effect.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER
President

The Jews of Cork

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her otherwise interesting account of the early days of the present Jewish community in Dublin (which appeared in your July issue), Mrs. Bloom introduces a fantastic story about the Jewish community in Cork, which, she writes, "might be of interest historically."

The Jewish community in Cork, at that time, consisted of hardly more than a *minyan* of wretchedly poor peddlers; how the petty feuds of such a little handful of Jews could be described as having any historical significance is not easy to understand. . . .

Notwithstanding what Mrs. Bloom, as a child, was told by her mother, her story is a highly colored travesty of a very simple episode, and a painful reflection on the character of a man whose integrity, piety, and learning is still a cherished memory to many members of present-day Irish Jewry. What amazes many Jews here is that a woman of Jessie Bloom's intelligence should so far lend credence to an absurd *bubbeh-meise* as to perpetuate in an American paper the maligning, a quarter of a century after his death, of a fine old gentleman, who, I can vouch from personal knowledge, was incapable of uttering any kind of malediction.

It is, perhaps, of greater interest to know that the grandchildren of the people concerned are happily united in marriage.

LAURENCE ELYAN

Dublin, Ireland

Torah or Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Emil Fackenheim in his review of *The Great Jewish Books* (November) stresses the primacy of Torah over Israel from the Orthodox viewpoint, and the primacy of Israel over Torah from the humanist viewpoint. I believe a case can be made for the equality of Torah and Israel, if not the primacy of Israel, in the Orthodox outlook.

Saadia's dictum has been overused and overrated by the minimizers of Jewish nationalism. . . . The dictum reads: Israel is a nation only by virtue of the Torah. The only justified deduction is that Torah is *indispensable*—but how does one deduce that Torah is primary, or that peoplehood is only a means, or that the survival of Israel is not a value by which to judge the validity of Torah?

Dr. Fackenheim admits "Orthodox belief has always regarded the Torah as a law of *life*," but this admission should have been given greater importance. If Bible and Talmud are proper Orthodox authorities, let us see what they say on the subject.

"Observe therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Deut. 4:6). That is pragmatic. So too are all the promises of rewards and the threats of punishments. . . .

The Talmud goes further in praise of Israel as an end. "The thought of Israel [in the mind of God] preceded the thought of all else" [presumably including Torah]. "Heaven and Earth were not created but for Israel." Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai makes it most specific: "Which was created for which, Torah for Israel or Israel for Torah? Is it not Torah for Israel? If Torah which was created for Israel endured forever, Israel certainly will endure forever." (Midrash Rabbah, Koheleth)

This does not justify a chauvinistic nationalism which claims: "My country right or wrong." But surely the survival of Israel was an end in itself for the Prophets and Rabbis. . . .

(RABBI) JACOB CHINTZ
Congregation Ahavas Achim
Detroit, Michigan

A Jewish Scholar

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I must tell you how much I enjoyed Rabbi Weiner's portrait of Mr. Setzer ("A Mystic Philosopher on East Broadway," November). I met our mystic of East Broadway on the WPA Writers' Project in the 1930's. He inspired one of the most interesting characters of my novel *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*. . . .

Rabbi Weiner has caught the innermost essence of an actual man that embodies the race—the truth of a character that transcends fiction. Let us hope that Rabbi Weiner's prose-poem-portrait may lead to a Guggenheim Fellowship for Mr. Setzer. For if ever a scholar, a poet, an artist was worthy of a fellowship, it is he.

ANZIA YEZIERSKA

New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

How Can You Say "God"?

ECLIPSE OF GOD: STUDIES IN THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY. By MARTIN BUBER. Harper. 192 pp. $2.50.

AT THE TURNING: THREE ADDRESSES ON JUDAISM. By MARTIN BUBER. Farrar, Straus, and Young. 62 pp. $1.50.

Reviewed by WILL HERBERG

THE addresses delivered by Martin Buber at the campuses he visited in the course of his recent American tour constituted an event of major intellectual significance that will have its repercussions for a long time to come. A great number of those who flocked to hear him speak may not have understood everything he was saying, but they all knew that they were in the presence of authentic greatness and were participating in something altogether outside the bounds of academic routine. Something of this almost charismatic feeling is recaptured in these volumes, which contain Buber's American lectures together with some earlier pieces. And in addition, these books make it possible to examine Buber's views more carefully and to evaluate them more dispassionately than could easily be done in the immediate and overwhelming presence of his personality. To this reader at least, such examination and evaluation are sufficient to prove, if proof at this late date were needed, that Buber's ideas have a power and relevance to human existence in many ways unique in contemporary thought.

THE theme of the first volume, *Eclipse of God*, which includes Buber's lectures at American universities with some additional pieces, is given in the memorable "Prelude: Report on Two Talks" (1932). Here Buber tells of two conversations which may be regarded as archetypal for our modern thinking. In the first, he recounts a discussion with a group of workingmen, in the course of which one of them challenged Buber with these words: "I do not need this hypothesis 'God' in order to be quite at home in the world." The world-view of science was enough, this man felt, to give him an understanding of the "real reality" of the universe. It was not difficult for Buber to shatter the security of this man's "scientific" *Weltanschauung* and to show how fragmentary and complex the findings of modern science really are, how far from yielding any comprehensive view of the "real reality" of things. Something beyond science was obviously necessary for a total *Weltanschauung*, Buber made clear. After a few moments' thought, the man raised his head and said, slowly: "You are right." Buber had convinced him. But convinced him of what? "What had I done?" Buber asked himself in dismay. "I had led the man to the threshold beyond which sat enthroned the majestic image which . . . Pascal called the God of the Philosophers. Had I wished for that? Had I not rather wished to lead him to the other, Him whom Pascal called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Him to whom one can say Thou?"

The other conversation was with a distinguished old philosopher to whom Buber read the preface of one of his books, then in publication. "How can you bring yourself to say 'God' time after time?" the old philosopher had asked. "How can you expect that your readers will take the word in the sense in which you wish it to be taken? . . . What word of human speech is so misused, so defiled, so desecrated as this? . . . When I hear the highest called 'God,' it sometimes seems almost blasphemous." "Yes," Buber remembers replying, "yes, it is the most heavy-laden of all human words. None has become so soiled, so mutilated. Just for this reason I may not abandon it. . . . Where might I find a word like it to describe the highest? . . . I do indeed mean Him whom the hell-tormented and heaven-storming generations of men mean. Certainly, they draw caricatures and write 'God' underneath. . . . But when all madness and

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delusion fall to dust, when they no longer say 'He, He,' but rather sigh 'Thou,' shout 'Thou,' and when they add 'God,' is it not the real God whom they implore, the One Living God? . . . We may not give up [this word]."

In one form or another, in one context or another, these two themes—really one—run through Buber's lectures. To proclaim the God whom one encounters in a living I-Thou relation in the fullness of concrete existence, and to distinguish this *living* God from the "images" and "ideas" of deity erected by the "philosophers," is his purpose, and he pursues this purpose discerningly through the complexities and involutions of modern thought. His critique of Sartre, though restrained, is annihilating, and his comments on Heidegger, an infinitely more serious thinker, are most revealing. The former he finds caught in an act of empty self-postulation in which man is called upon to fill the throne of "God the Father," who has been "suppressed," and to "invent values" for life; the latter, Heidegger, is shown attempting to create "a concept of a rebirth of God out of the thought of truth which falls into the enticing nets of historical time" (i.e., the "revelation of truth" which is Hitler). Thereby, notes Buber acutely, "the path of this existentialism seems to vanish."

The "atheistic" existentialism of Sartre and Heidegger (who, however, denies any atheistic implications of his thought) is one aspect of the "modern thinking" which Buber examines in its relation to religion; the other aspect is Jung's psychology. His critique of Jung is most effective. In a few brief pages, he shows convincingly that Jung's views on religion constitute essentially a psychologistic pseudo-metaphysic, a latter-day version of gnostic theosophy. The analysis is brilliant, and ought to be carefully studied by those who feel at all attracted, as so many do today, to Jungian "mysticism."

Buber presents his proclamation of the living God, in contrast to the pseudo-gods of the philosophers and psychologists, not merely in the context of recent thinking but also against the background of the development of thought from Descartes to Heidegger; for certain purposes, indeed, he goes back to Plato and Greco-Oriental antiquity. His insights are profound and expressed with unusual simplicity and clarity. Among the seven papers that form the body of the book it is hard to choose, but it seems to me that the lectures on "Religion and Philosophy" and "Religion and Modern Thinking" (Sartre, Heidegger, Jung)—along with the older paper, "The Love of God and the Idea of Deity," in which Buber shows how Hermann Cohen's authentic *love* of God carried him, almost against his will and certainly against his philosophic conscience, to a God who is no longer an "idea"—are of peculiar excellence.

This is not to say, of course, that Buber's thinking as exhibited in this volume is beyond criticism. It seems to me, for example, that while he is quite devastating in his critique of the pseudo-gods of philosophy, he rather withholds his fire against the pseudo-religion of mysticism, in which there is the same replacement of the living God who enters into *personal* (I-Thou) relations by an impersonal "divineness" which one may contemplate and ultimately perhaps "unite" with. Indeed, in the last analysis, as the examples of Plato, Plotinus, Spinoza, and many Hindu thinkers show, there is no distinguishing between philosophy and mysticism: the discursive thinking of the former leads to, and is swallowed up in, the "unitive knowledge" of the latter. Buber, it seems to me, is too ready to discover signs of an implicit personal encounter in the mystical experience and of an implicit personal Thou in the utterly impersonal deity of the mystics. From another direction, I think, Buber seriously misapprehends (in the paper, "Religion and Ethics") the nature of normative Christian ethics, because in spite of everything he thinks of Christianity as the kind of "individualistic" faith which 19th-century Protestantism and (in part) Catholicism conceived it to be. The authentic Christian doctrine of the Church as a "people of God," so strongly emphasized in contemporary Christian thinking, seems to escape him, perhaps because, with his German "romantic" background, he cannot think of a people except as a folk or nation. In any case, however, these points on which I find myself in disagreement are altogether secondary and do not in the least affect the quite extraordinary power and significance of the work.

At the Turning consists of three addresses on Judaism delivered last year in New York under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary. The same purpose dominates these lectures: to proclaim the living God who is the God of Israel in contrast to the distortions, caricatures, and pseudo-gods with which He is so often confused. Only this time Buber carries

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forward his purpose in a specifically Jewish framework of thought.

Again Buber attempts to define his thinking in the context of significant phases of contemporary spirituality. In the second paper, "The Silent Question," Buber notes the striking fact that whereas "in the springtime of modern society, spiritually significant Jews turned to Christianity not for the sake of Christian religion but for the sake of Christian culture . . . today the sympathies worth noting that spiritual Jews feel for Christianity are rooted in a sense of religious lack and a feeling of religious longing." He takes as examples Henri Bergson and Simone Weil, both Jews who turned to Christianity for the religious truth they were seeking. Buber shows very clearly that the two cases are not at all the same: Bergson turned away from Judaism because he did not really understand it and took a distorted form for the reality; Simone Weil, on the other hand, without knowing very much about it, understood the life-affirming spirit of Judaism and hated it all the more in the intensity of her life-denying, self-dissolving mystical spirituality. What she hated in Judaism, in Israel, she found also in Christianity, and therefore, for all the attraction that Christian mysticism held out for her, she could not prevail upon herself to join the Church; the Church was still "far too Jewish" for her taste.

In the course of this "controversy" with Bergson and Weil, Buber is able to develop some basic themes of Jewish faith: the living God; Israel as "people of God" understood as a "religious category" and not to be simply identified with the "actual people"; the transcendence of justice in love; the organic interrelation of universalism and particularism ("Within this universalism, however, there is a particularization of vocation"), of love of God and love of fellow man, of the present actuality and the Messianic future of consummation, of being and doing. Had Bergson known Jewish faith in its fullness and inwardness, he might perhaps have found in it what he was seeking. Why did he not know it as such? Why does the world not know it as such? Why does contemporary Jewry not know it as such? "Will Jewry itself," Buber asks, "perceive that its very existence depends upon the revival of its religious existence? The Jewish State may assure the future of a nation of Jews . . .; Judaism will live only if it brings to life again the primeval Jewish relationship to God, the world, and mankind."

In "The Dialogue between Heaven and Earth," the third address, Buber formulates more strikingly perhaps than ever before the divine-human encounter of call and response that is at the heart of Israel's faith and that forms the basic texture of Israel's Scriptures. He asks: does this dialogue still continue? Both believers and unbelievers tend to deny it—the former asserting that while God surely did speak at one time, He is now silent and has left a book in His place; the latter, not merely the atheistic unbelievers but the "philosophic theists" as well, simply cannot admit that the "Divine" (by whatever name) can speak or be spoken to. Yet God does speak: "In the infinite language of events and situations, eternally changing, but plain to the truly attentive, transcendence speaks to our hearts at the essential moments of personal life. And there is a language in which we can answer it; it is the language of our actions and attitudes, our reactions and abstentions; the totality of these answers is what we may call our answering-for-ourselves. . . ." Both the individual and the community are addressed by God; both must respond.

God speaks; but the God who speaks sometimes "hideth His face from the house of Jacob" (Isa. 28:21); there are times when we are unable to recognize God's word in history, and in nature too (although Buber tends to overlook that), "so uncanny and 'barbarous' do [His deeds] seem to us." These are the "mute times, when everything that occurs in the human world and pretends to historical significance appears to us as empty of God. . . . For one who believes in the living God, who knows about Him, and is fated to spend his life in a time of His hiddenness, it is very difficult to live." Such a "mute time" is ours: our life is the life of Job, the forsaken of God. For that very reason, the only answer to our lament is the answer Job received: "the true answer that Job receives is God's appearance only, only this that distance turns into nearness, that 'his eye sees Him' (42:5), that he knows Him again." No explanation, no justification, no theodicy: "nothing [is] adjusted, wrong has not become right, nor cruelty kindness; nothing has happened but that man again hears God's address." Are we able, even in this "muteness," even in this dreadful time of "hiddenness," to maintain our side in the dialogue? "Do we stand overcome before the hidden face of God as the

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tragic hero of the Greeks before faceless fate? No; rather even now, we *contend,* we too, with God, even with Him, the Lord of Being, whom we once, we here, chose for our Lord. We do not put up with earthly being; we struggle for its redemption, and struggling we appeal to the help of our Lord, who is again and still a hiding one. In such a state, we await His voice. . . ." In these unforgettable words, Buber has defined both the despair and the hope of the Jew in the contemporary world.

The first essay, "Judaism and Civilization," seems to me the weakest in the book. The strains of utopianism and folk-romanticism that impaired some of Buber's earlier writings come to the fore here as nowhere else in this volume. Distinctions are blurred, particularly the radical distinction between the Biblical faiths and the pagan "religions of the world"; the rise of civilizations is unequivocally attributed to a "religious," or theonomous, principle, despite the testimony of Scripture, tradition, and experience; the prophets are said to have "staked their lives to save civilization"; Messianism is robbed of its transcendent dimension and the kingdom of God is presented as something quite "natural," virtually continuous with ordinary historical existence, though as Baron has pointed out, the Messianic vision of Israel, the "new heaven and new earth," is a vision of an age in which, through divine action, " 'history' will finally vanquish 'nature,' even changing its very course, for in that day 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb' (Isa. 11:6)." Buber disavows the "culture-optimism" of recent "liberal" theology, but this first essay is altogether too much permeated with it. There is little sense of the ambivalence of all human culture, of the ambiguity of all human civilizations, of the way in which even the best and highest of man's creations violate as well as implement the theonomous principle. "It is the belief," says Buber, explaining his view, "that just as every sinner can find forgiveness by 'turning' to God, so can a sinful civilization." To which it must be added: yes, civilizations can repent—in a way and up to a point; but just as the repentant sinner remains a sinner though repentant, so, even more so, does the culture remain sinful, ambiguous, and contradictory for all its repentance—infinitely far from the kingdom of God.

Interpreting Hoelderlin, Buber notes, Heidegger has said: "Our time is the time of gods who have fled and of the God who is coming"; "we

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live in the no-longer of the departed gods and the not-yet of the Coming One." But is not this true, more or less, of all times, of all human existence? Faith cannot become operative in human existence except in tension with unfaith. We who today, amidst the collapse of the idols, stand "waiting for God," will find in these two books of Buber's, as in his entire magnificent work of decades, an articulation of the profoundest truth of our being.

History Professors and Historians

AMERICAN HISTORY AND AMERICAN HISTORIANS: A REVIEW OF RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. By H. HALE BELLOT. University of Oklahoma Press. 336 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

UNTIL near the beginning of this century, the major works of historical scholarship had been written by "gentlemen" with an avocational interest in history; since then, Mr. Hale Bellot tells us, history has become the domain of professors. In Justin Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," a collaborative series appearing from 1884 to 1889, less than a third of the thirty-four authors were professors (only two of history), and only one had received graduate training in history. In the "American Nation Series," its counterpart twenty years later, nearly all the authors were university professors who had done graduate work.

The history of American historical writing during the critical period when it was being annexed into the academic empire is the subject of Mr. Hale Bellot's book. His work is itself an impressive piece of scholarship, with useful bibliographies; but it is technical and often ponderous. It is really an account of the growth of professionalism among American historians. His account is cast into a description of the two phases of recent historical scholarship. The first, beginning in the 1880's under German influence, sought the origin of our institutions among Anglo-Saxon tribes and in the German forest; its halcyon days were at Johns Hopkins University under Herbert Baxter Adams. The second (to which the book is mainly devoted) began in the 1890's under the stimulus of Frederick Jackson Turner, and looked to the frontier and the American forest for the roots of our culture.

The reader of this catalogue of American historical writing during the period when it was taken over by a specialized profession cannot fail to draw certain conclusions about the effect of a growing professionalism on the character of that literature and on our resources for understanding our own past. With the domination of what Mr. Hale Bellot calls the "Middle Western school," much of our historical writing (or at least of our monograph writing) has become an attempt to document the Turner thesis. Except for a rare Vernon L. Parrington or Walter Prescott Webb, a discouraging number of historians have undertaken to ask the same questions that Turner suggested, but of more and more limited bodies of material. Turner himself had the daring to ask how the past could help us understand the uniqueness and the virtues of our institutions. His disciples, under the guise of "objectivity" —too often a euphemism for academic timidity —have defended the technical character of their exercises; they have expressed a negative or at best a neutral approach to our institutions. We look in vain for that normative flavor which gives pungency to the work of Turner himself, and to that of our greatest historians from Tocqueville, Francis Parkman, and Henry Adams to Parrington and Beard.

ACCORDING to Mr. Hale Bellot, a result of the growth of the historian's profession and of the shift in emphasis has been that "most of the American history that was published before 1910 has been out-moded." It is hard to know what this could mean, unless one is pessimist enough to believe that dullness and narrowness have lately become the mode. True, no one can fail to be impressed by the prodigious accumulation and classification of facts about our past, during the last half-century. What is more significant is how few new insights have been given by all this literature,

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how few works of literary value have been produced by this enormous industry.

It would be more accurate to say that much of the American history that will never be outmoded was published before 1910. Despite the growth of a respectable academic profession, the elaboration of techniques, and the accumulation of materials, the important historical works of the "pre-professional" period have, if anything, increased in stature. These works would include, for example, the writings of Parkman, Prescott, and Henry Adams. Nor is this surprising or paradoxical, unless one starts from the assumption that an 1890 work on American history is as liable to be obsolete as an 1890 work on physics.

It is still a striking fact how many of the important works continue to be written by men for whom history is an avocation. A list of the recent books of American history most likely to be read fifty years hence would still be dominated by men who were, for the most part, not academic historians. Such a list could hardly omit the writings of Mark Sullivan, Douglas Freeman, and Herbert Agar, all newspapermen by profession, or Theodore Roosevelt and Albert J. Beveridge, who were statesmen, or Carl Sandburg. Even Charles A. Beard was partly banished and partly self-exiled from the university community. Perhaps men outside the academic environment are bolder to seek the contemporary relevance of the past, to give artistic form to their vision, and hence to set themselves outside the sterilizing quest for objectivity.

Turner himself would probably not have dominated the academic scene had he not made (in Mr. Hale Bellot's phrase) "the first clear break with the pure inductive method that proceeded without hypotheses to the tabulation of facts." And yet the artistic vision of Turner became a technical mannerism in his successors. With the present academic overvaluing of technique, and the undervaluing of art and imagination, professors of history are today committed to the axiom that by taking a Ph.D. in history in some reputable university a person of moderate intelligence can be "trained" into being a historian. A corollary is the notion that any such person, if not capable of writing an extensive historical work, can at least write a piece of one: that if he cannot be taught to paint a whole portrait, he can at least learn to draw hands and feet. These assumptions have bred the notion that a large historical work is nothing but a collection of monographs—"expanding your Ph.D. thesis." The extensive, and hardly exhilarating, bibliography of recent American historical writing that Mr. Hale Bellot has given us shows how large a proportion of the literature has the character of Ph.D. theses, however much expanded. There is no denying that the elaboration of the Ph.D. as an "objective" test of competence has given us a larger number of competent teachers of history than any other country. But it has led also to the grossest confusion of historical scholarship with the historian's art.

The Babbittry of Literature

FROM MAIN STREET TO STOCKHOLM, LETTERS OF SINCLAIR LEWIS. Harcourt, Brace. 307 pp. $5.

Reviewed by IRVING HOWE

ANYONE who knew Sinclair Lewis only through these letters would suppose he was a dreary hack with the soul of a sparrow. True, the book contains mainly business letters to Alfred Harcourt, his first publisher, and in such letters a writer hardly pours out his soul—though he often pours out his troubles. But Lewis is here so persistently the glad-handing extrovert, chin high and morale bulging, that one wonders how he wrote so sardonic a novel as *Babbitt*.

Writers are always interested in money: they have to be. For Dostoevsky money meant the alleviation of hunger, for Marx and Balzac it figured—when they could forget their personal need for it—as a symbol of a fetishistic economy. But for Lewis money meant something else: a way to break into the forbidden precincts of business. Part of his power as a novelist was his capacity for becoming absorbed, as few intellectuals really can, in the details of business: how a salesman chivies a rival, how a hotel manager keep his books, how an industrialist spends his vacation. Some writers break into souls, Lewis appropriated surfaces—and it would be a dismal conception of literature which banished surfaces in the name of souls. For a while Lewis fingered through America as if he were examining a junk yard, then as if he were fondling the items in a small-town department store; but junk yard or department store, he meant to take inventory. And for that, money was needed, money was the ticket of entry, the secret password.

If these letters reveal him at all, it is not

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unjust to say that he pursued money with pleasure and passion. Letter after letter is filled with schemes for pushing his books. Some of his ideas for advertisements now seem so corny as to please by their innocence: for his early hack romance *Free Air* he proposed ads reading, "Whenever you see the sign FREE AIR before a garage think of the one book that makes motoring romantic FREE AIR." He warned Harcourt not to bill *Main Street* as too highbrow lest it cut sales. He kept dreaming up gimmicks for jollying reviewers, editors, booksellers. And all the while Harcourt, equally concerned with money but more restrained as a businessman, kept replying with notes of caution.

THOUGH drab in their own right, Lewis's letters provide useful information about the publishing industry. In America the publisher tends to take over some of the functions of the European literary clique. Enjoying a vicarious prestige, he becomes a kind of big brother who "looks after" his writers; he salves bruised egos, protects mutual interests, runs errands. Unavoidably, he is also the writer's enemy, rushing him to complete books too quickly, defending the financial interests of the firm against those of the writer, and sometimes acting as spokesman for the mediocre average of public taste. This ambiguous relationship, which flourished in the 20's and still lingers on today, leads writers like Lewis to become amateur scouts for their publishers, identifying themselves with the firm.

Now the truth is that every writer, particularly the kind called "free lance," is a small businessman. He may feel the maneuvering required by his position to be irksome, yet he sometimes enjoys it more than he admits. He finds the book industry fascinating precisely to the extent that it is not yet entirely an industry; to the extent that it occasionally functions by sentiment, personal idiosyncrasy, and clumsiness. This was true of Lewis, and probably of others.

But then comes the blow-up. The last letter in the book is from Lewis, written just after he won the Nobel Prize, and it announces that he is leaving Harcourt to find a publisher who will *really* work hard to sell his books. One never quite knows whether Lewis actually dropped his publisher or was hoping to be coaxed back. In any case, the correspondence ends on a note of estrangement and distaste. Coming from a writer who feels himself to be slipping—say Sherwood Anderson in 1925, when he left Huebsch—such a letter has a touch of pathos; coming from Lewis in 1931, after the consistently large sales of his novels, it suggests either an excess of guile, or paranoia.

It has become a commonplace of criticism to say that Lewis was himself partly a Babbitt. Of course he was; but if we don't intend censure when we say Dostoevsky drew Raskolnikov partly from himself, why should we become indignant at the thought that Lewis was partly his own model for Babbitt? What *is* appalling is that Lewis never seems to have been aware that he was mimicking his own mimicry, never seems to have interrupted one of his letters with a grin, "Lord, Harcourt, don't I sound just like Babbitt!" His sense of fact was in no way deficient, it is only about the quality of his self-awareness that one can complain.

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REPORT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA. By BASIL DAVIDSON. British Book Centre. 286 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by G. F. HUDSON

SOUTH AFRICA is the paradise of the fellow-traveling Marxist—not, of course, to live in,

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but to visit. It is the country that enables him to renew his faith, for there, more than anywhere else in the world, is it possible, without excessive make-believe, to see reality conforming to the Marxist picture of capitalist society moving towards utter catastrophe through the constant increase of internal tensions. In the Western world as a whole the last ten years have been very disappointing for the prophets of ineluctable doom. After a period in which everything seemed to be turning out in accordance with the theory—with tractors set to destroy fruit trees while men starved, and with fascism winning in one country after another—the sequence began to go wrong. Fascism was defeated in a struggle in which only the most besotted Communist could deny that the Western democracies had shown great strength and determination. Since then the United States, instead of undergoing postwar economic collapse, has attained new heights of productivity. The British Labor party, instead of acting as the lackey of capitalism, has carried out economic and social legislation which cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as in the interest of the bourgeoisie. Instead of a general intensification of imperialist and racial oppression, Britain has given independence to its greatest colonial territory and there has been steady improvement in the status of the American Negro. Even the French Fourth Republic has so far failed to get itself overthrown. All this is most exasperating to those staunch in the faith that mankind cannot avoid disaster except by the road marked out by Lenin and Stalin.

But there is always South Africa. There, as Mr. Basil Davidson justly describes the situation, "are about two and a half million whites and about nine million non-whites, and between these two there exist relations of inequality, hatred and contempt which are hard to convey in words, and which are rapidly becoming worse." For Mr. Davidson, fresh from a Europe that has so obstinately refused to be as disastrous as it ought to be, nothing could be more encouraging and consoling than the South African scene, and as he is a very good writer, he has been able to produce a really devastating book about it without ever having to reveal (as he could not avoid doing in a preceding book, *Germany: What Now?*) on which side of the Iron Curtain his heart belongs.

South Africa is a country where, as Mr. Davidson reports, the South African Airways Corporation requires the head-covers on the seats of its aircraft to be "changed immediately if the seat has been used by a non-European passenger"; where the South African Protection Society recently awarded a gold medal to a boy who had starved for two days rather than eat food prepared by an Indian cook; where both marriage and non-marital sexual intercourse between white and colored are criminal offenses; and where infant mortality in certain native slum quarters of large cities is estimated at around 30 per cent. When it is added that those thus kept in an inferior status and in conditions of social neglect outnumber the ruling whites by nearly four to one, and provide the great bulk of the labor employed both on the land and in industry, we have a situation

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where class and racial conflict almost coincide, and where there is a disparity of numbers highly dangerous to the dominant race-class. Add to this that South Africa white racialism crushes not only the African native but also the considerable community of Asian immigrants, involving permanent relations of antagonism with India and Pakistan, and, finally, that the white South Africans themselves are bitterly divided between the settlers of British origin and the traditionally anti-British Boers. It is hardly possible to imagine any complication which could be added to the stresses of this wealthy yet profoundly unhappy country.

Mr. Davidson rightly points out that most of the men now in power in South Africa were openly pro-Nazi during the last war. Indeed a well-organized and ruthless dictatorship is the only means by which such a society as exists in South Africa can be held together for long on its present basis. The Nationalist regime is still trying to combine a policy of accentuated racial discrimination with formal adherence to parliamentary democracy (for whites only, of course) and an independent judiciary, but it is unlikely that this can last much longer. South Africa must in the near future either move towards a political order of definitely totalitarian type, or reverse its course and make a supreme effort at reconciliation with the non-white communities—a task that is today infinitely harder than it would have been if undertaken twenty years ago. Already white racialism has produced among the younger politically conscious Africans a corresponding extremism, which no longer aspires merely to equality with the whites in a plural society, but aims at driving them out of Africa altogether as a race of invaders and robbers. This new tendency has affected even the (formally dissolved) Communist party, which has always stood for racial equality but has had white leaders; the new type of African revolutionary militant will not follow white men within the party any more than outside it.

But whatever might happen to white Communists in an African revolutionary upheaval, there is no doubt that the color bar is today the greatest single asset of Communist international policy. Communism repudiates racial discrimination, and though in Russia it has been amalgamated with traditional Russian imperialism so as to surpass czarist precedents in the oppression of national minorities (as shown particularly in its postwar acts of genocide in the Caucasus), it has not made concessions to racialism because race doctrine was one of the few evil things that did not exist in pre-revolutionary Russia. The old Russian empire had no Negroes, and with a large part of its aristocracy admittedly of Tartar descent, it could not afford to be snobbish about "Aryan" origins. Modern racial feeling has arisen primarily from the contacts of Nordic man with the Negro in the course of the overseas expansion of Western Europe, and its application to the traditional religious-communal anti-Semitism of European peoples is recent and derivative. The trouble is that racialism has not perished with the defeat of Hitler, but remains as a major problem of Western civilization and the most serious international liability of the free world. It is useless to expect solidarity with Asian and African peoples as long as large numbers of the so-called white race believe that the mere color of their own skins or texture of their own hair makes them intrinsically superior to the great majority of mankind.

It would nevertheless be a mistake to suppose that racialist reaction, with all it implies, represents the opposite pole of ideology from Communism, just as it was profoundly misleading to imagine that Hitler and Stalin were at the opposite extremes of politics and to ignore the totalitarian character that their regimes had in common. The political observer who looks beyond the specific racialist issue will find a curious bond of spiritual kinship between Moscow and Capetown. Thus, for example, since the migration of native workers to the towns has caused a shortage of labor on the land at the old rates of wages, the South African government has been generously assisting the white farmers by providing them with African convict labor. The farmers combine to build local prison camps, and the government then hires out the convicts, who are exploited for the private profit of the farmers, just as in the Soviet Union convicts are exploited for the profit of the Soviet state and the production bonuses of MVD managers. Mr. Davidson is rightly indignant at the South African practice, but his ideological sympathies naturally prevent him from calling attention to the Soviet (or Chinese Communist) parallel. But it is no accident that South Africa should be found side by side with the Communist states in the category of countries which authorize the employ-

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ment of forced labor for profit as a regular part of the economic system. In the leading Western democracies today, whatever may have been the case in the past, it is an accepted principle of penal legislation that prison labor should not be used for the economic profit either of individuals or of the state. And the most significant line of division in the contemporary world runs between nations which recognize inalienable rights of man and those which regard whole categories of human beings, whether on racial or political grounds, as less than human.

The "New Yorker" Leather-Bound

J. P. MARQUAND, ESQUIRE. By PHILIP HAMBURGER. Houghton Mifflin. 114 pp. $2.00.

Reviewed by SEYMOUR KRIM

PHILIP HAMBURGER's profile of J. P. Marquand first appeared in the *New Yorker* this past summer; in intention at least it was one of the most novel pieces of reporting to be published in that increasingly beleaguered magazine in recent years. Its novelty and genuine—if muted—audacity lay in the fact that Hamburger attempted to imitate Marquand's style and point of view in writing about him, and wrote a biographical sketch in the form of a short novel. Apart from being an interesting experiment, the piece represented a twist on the typical *New Yorker* profile and served to point up how ambitious and "formal" that genre has become. Compare Dorothy Parker's profile of Ernest Hemingway, published about 1929, with Lillian Ross's brilliant poker-faced job of two years ago: the difference between these two profiles, both equally interesting, represents the difference between the fresh, experimental days of a genre and its leather-bound period, when the classic form has been achieved and caution and fanatic attention to detail attend each new effort.

Few people realize how much sheer labor and thought have gone into *New Yorker* profiles ever since the days when Harold Ross, according to an office joke, demanded that each subject be "facted" down to a urinalysis. What was originally a literal "profile"—a sketch done on the run—has now become invested with the exhaustiveness, labor, and brooding of a chapter

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out of Proust. Yet no previous American journalism has been so painstaking, so accurate, or so elegant, and for that we should be grateful.

We sometimes forget, but certainly none of the "bright young men" who have passed by the tens through the *New Yorker* offices will ever forget, that during the height of its fame it was basically a newspaperman's dream magazine: its founding editors were all ex-newspapermen, facts were its holy lights, accuracy and thoroughness its exhausting rituals. This underlying journalistic philosophy is something which critical intellectuals may not have fully understood when they demanded from the *New Yorker* something alien to it. Even during the period when its fiction had wide influence on the form and standards of the short story, it was most characteristically an ideal newspaperman's fiction: expert at the naturalistic transcription of life and embarrassed before "significance" and "art." (Remember the hundreds of dead-pan vignettes, and the mad skill devoted to being more frigid and inexpressive than the next writer?) Now, since Harold Ross's death, the break-up of the magazine's security in a limited realistic fiction, and the general scurrying around to find a new point of view—psychoanalysis and the United Nations are approved of in "The Talk of the Town," but fiction must reconcile less public matters—the *New Yorker* has become more eclectic than before and has lost much of its unique flavor. Paradoxically, as the magazine has become more "intellectual" and "responsible" it has also become more commonplace and, as people have remarked, will no longer gamble in quite the same old headlong or iconoclastic way. But in one respect faith has been kept with Ross and the other founding fathers, and that is in the profiles, which have developed the magazine's indigenous love of fact into an elaborate art.

Each profile must now be a "classic," worked on for as long as eight months, microscopically checked by a squad of fact-confirmers, polished, meditated upon, blessed, etc. It demands from its writer the kind of severe effort that formerly went into "creative" work; and in a real sense it is just that, for, to feed our ravenous yet exacting curiosity, journalism in our time has become a significant art, often with more pertinence and interest for us than purely imaginative work. But while it appeases our demand for fact it must meet our literary standards as well; thus, if you will, we may see in Philip Hamburger's *J. P. Marquand, Esquire* the attempt to marry Flaubert and the Associated Press.

WHEREAS the typical *New Yorker* profile is an objective piece of reporting that assembles all the printable facts about any one individual in a style to which we are now accustomed—

Harry Everett Clark, who has been a timekeeper at boxing matches in Madison Square Garden for the last nineteen years and a significant figure on that stretch of Eighth Avenue between Forty-eighth and Fifty-first Streets in New York City formerly known as Jacobs' Beach, is a lean, semi-bald gentleman of fifty-three whose reputation as an astrologer is regarded seriously by sports writers, fight-managers and the gladiators themselves, etc., etc.

—Hamburger's piece represents what happens when any standard art form gets dull: the artist has to liven it up merely to make it interesting for himself. Hamburger first showed his talent in this direction some years ago, when he devastated Walt Whitman's illegitimate literary son, Norman Corwin, in the form of a super-duper Corwin radio script—*The Odyssey of the Oblong Blur*. Here he tells the whole story in Marquand-like prose and in the form of a Marquand novel, with Hamburger himself—as a reporter named Craig—and Marquand as the "characters." In theory it is a refreshing and ingenious piece of reporting, giving us both the facts and a sympathetic literary imitation which conveys the flavor of how Marquand very likely feels about his own life.

In addition, the research involved is little short of staggering; Hamburger read all twenty-nine of Marquand's novels, including the Mr. Moto stories and other skillful pot-boilers, and one hundred and ten articles, and further briefed himself on every wrinkle and crease in Marquand's intimate biography and that of his forebears; one cannot fail to be impressed by the monument of accurate fact that thus reveals itself. Hamburger also does reasonably well with maintaining the illusion of the novelist's style and point of view.

Before one has finished reading, however, tedium sets in, and there arises like a vague fume the feeling that a disproportionate amount of truly hard labor has gone into bringing forth a mouse. The loving care for surface detail which saturates the profile—

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By Lord Acton*

"BY liberty I mean the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion. The state is competent to assign duties and draw the line between good and evil only in its immediate sphere. Beyond the limits of things necessary for its well-being it can only give indirect help to fight the battle of life by promoting the influences which prevail against temptation—religion, education, and the distribution of wealth. The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities . . .

"Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end. It is not for the sake of a good public administration that it is required, but for security in the pursuit of the highest objectives of civil society and of private life. A generous spirit prefers that his country should be poor and weak and of no account but free, rather than powerful, prosperous and enslaved. It is better to be the citizen of a humble commonwealth in the Alps than a subject of the superb autocracy that overshadows half of Asia and Europe."

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The Somerset Club pleased him, too, with its fantastically good, and cold, sweet Martinis, its corn-dodgers, its Madeira sauce with peppercorns. . . .

—is overdone to the point that the novelist's life becomes trivialized by being reduced to the mere aggregate of his pleasures, displeasures, or possessions. Sadly enough, Marquand emerges from this portrait almost spiritually void.

Hamburger, to be sure, is writing *à la* Marquand, which means a strong emphasis on simple material factors. But readers of Marquand's novels know that he has extreme sensitivity to the commonplace; this is what, despite the outward skill of his imitation, Hamburger lacks. The average lives under Marquand's hands, modestly it is true, but usually interestingly and with complete authenticity. A Marquand novel gets closer to what appears to be upper-middle-class reality than the works of more ambitious writers because its author knows very well by now how to make shrewd use of the humdrum—menus, furniture, bank accounts, etc.—making of it the significant background for the domesticated passions of his characters. Marquand rarely overplays this concern with material detail, or makes it an end in itself, but always uses it as a means to establishing the illusion of "reality" in the reader's mind. Hamburger, in imitating Marquand, uses only the surface of the novelist's style and, making it an end in itself, embosses that surface so that the detail becomes all there is, becomes thin, trivial, and often shallowly materialistic.

As for the man who emerges from this profile, he strikes us as a good person but less complicated than seems likely for a productive, mature artist; one assumes here that Mr. Hamburger, for all the seeming frankness and intimacy of his story, is either suppressing certain aspects of the novelist's personality or glossing over them, in the mistaken notion that novelists should be made to seem "like everybody else." If they were, we wouldn't read them.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Will Herberg, author of *Judaism and Modern Man,* has been a frequent contributor to Commentary.

Daniel J. Boorstin's latest book, *The Genius of American Politics,* will be published shortly by the University of Chicago Press.

Irving Howe is the author of *Sherwood Anderson,* in the American Men of Letters Series, and *William Faulkner: A Critical Study.*

G. F. Hudson is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and a regular contributor to the London *Economist.*

Seymour Krim's article "Our Middle-Aged 'Young Writers'" appeared in our October issue.

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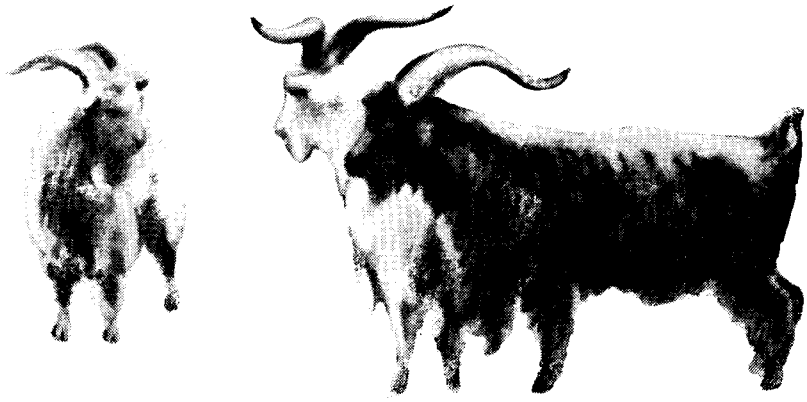

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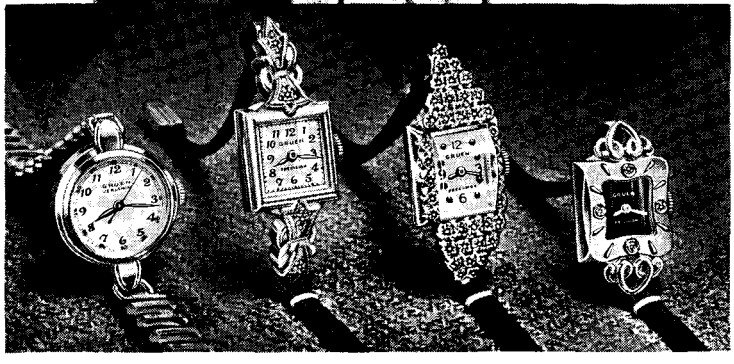

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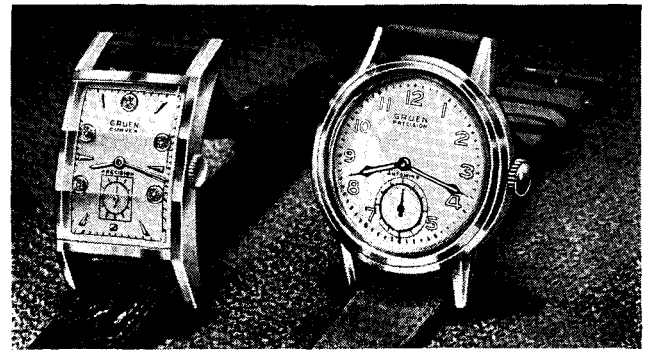

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